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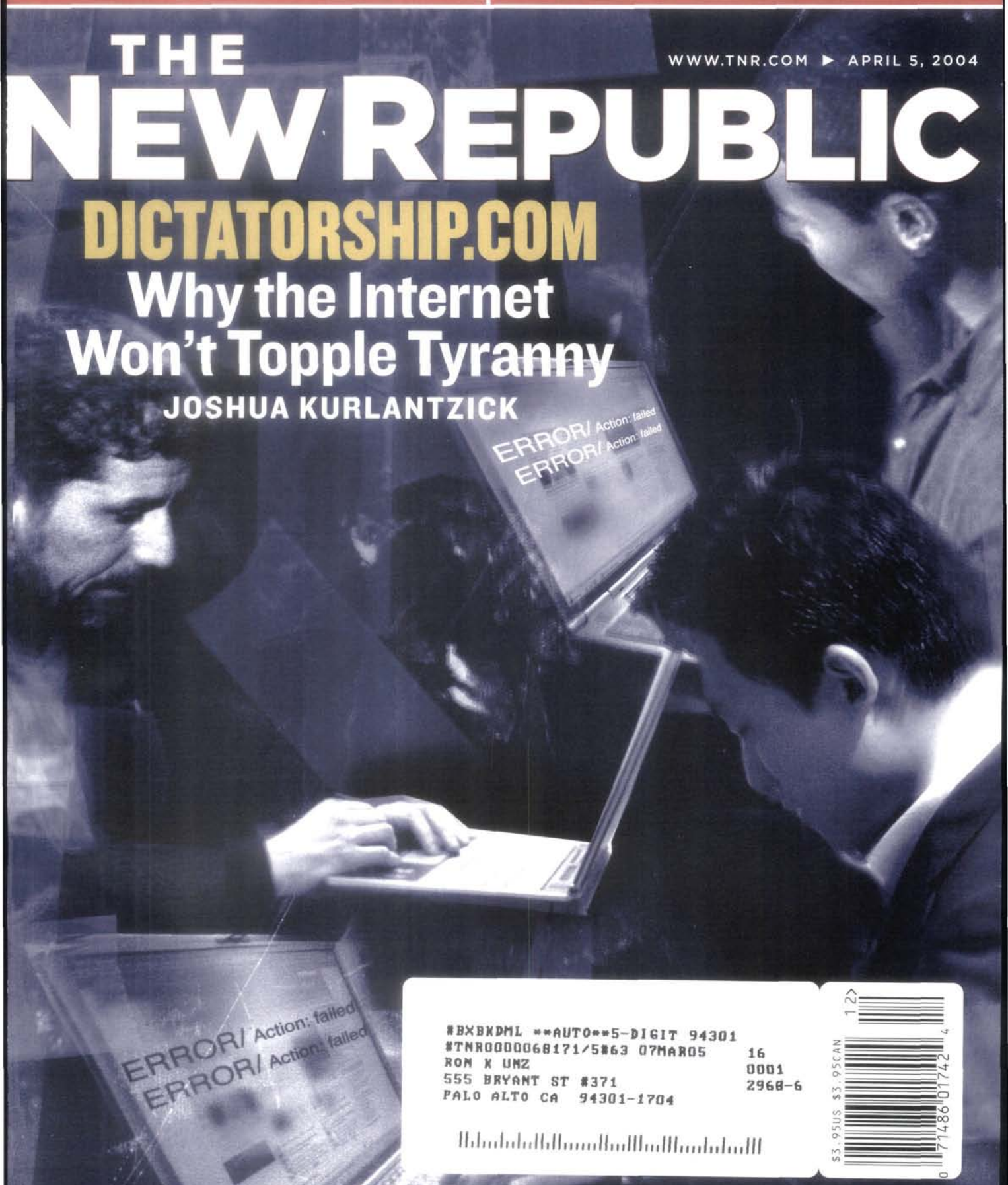

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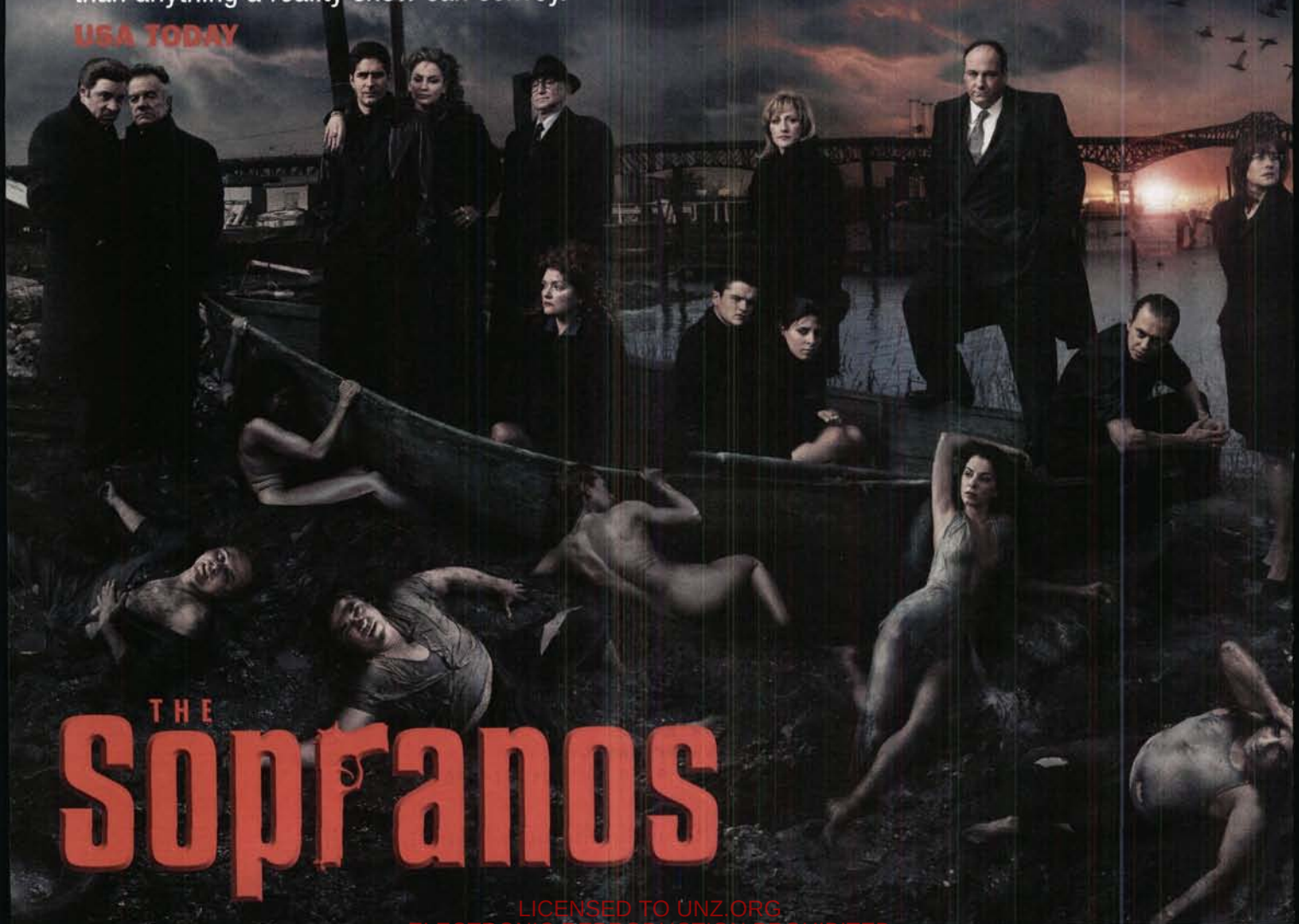

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CORRESPONDENCE

THE RIGHT'S STUFF

ANDREW SULLIVAN IS CLEARLY right to condemn as divisive, repugnant, and contrary to the Constitution's federalist scheme the proposed constitutional amendment to stop same-sex marriage from becoming legal in any state ("Revolution, Televised," March 1). He does not allude, however, to the only reason why a constitutional amendment of some kind may be in order: namely, the way the Constitution's Full Faith and Credit clause, which requires states to recognize marital relations existing under the legal regimes of other states, threatens to force the ipse dixit of four activist judges in Massachusetts down the throats of other states. This offensive situation might be addressed by a modest amendment requiring "full faith and credit" only where the first state's action carried out a policy toward marriage arrived at through a legislative process rather than pronounced by an activist court—or a renegade mayor. This approach would allow same-sex marriage to make inroads over time, even where unpopular. It would also assert the authority of state legislatures, put judges in their proper place, and trigger state-by-state political resolution of the issue, which Sullivan calls "the best recourse." Submission of a polarizing issue to the democratic process is precisely what *Roe* v. *Wade* precluded, thus catalyzing the counter-authoritarian political movement we now know as the "religious right."

CLARK HAVIGHURST
Durham, North Carolina

IT BAFFLES ME THAT ANDREW Sullivan can say that gay Republicans are just now "discovering" that the GOP is fundamentally opposed to "gay love." Under what delusional rock has he been hiding? Groucho Marx once self-deprecatingly said that he would never want to be part of a club that would allow him to be a member, but, in the case of gay Republicans, they want so badly to be part of a club that laughs in their faces and demeans their family values. Sullivan's naïve and faux-shocked realization is long overdue and is evidence that there is still a

huge population of self-haters who want so badly to magically morph into straight, white, Christian males that they desperately and sickeningly beg to be let into the big Club Repub. Pretending to separate his socially open mind from his fiscally conservative one will not make Sullivan an equal in their eyes.

JOSHUA WINOGRADE
New York, New York

UNCONVENTIONAL

TO THOSE CONTEMPORARIES OF John Kerry like myself who have spent a good portion of their adulthood studying the Vietnam War, it is reassuring to have a presidential candidate who learned firsthand that U.S. intervention can be bad both for foreign nations and for the United States itself (Franklin Foer, "Like Father," March 8). To one whose default assumptions favor U.S. intervention abroad, this is cause for concern, as Franklin Foer makes clear. Foer went too far, however, when he ascribed putative "anti-anti-communist" tendencies to the youthful Kerry, who argued for Red Chinese admission into the United Nations. That was the national topic for high school and junior high debate in the early '60s, and I would guess that Kerry, like myself, was assigned the affirmative by lot. Like me, he presumably remembers what a hopeless task the affirmative had way back then, and, like me, he lived to see Richard Nixon adopt that position ten years later. In short, this was one of his (and my) many lessons in how wrong conventional wisdom could be. I'm glad we received them.

DAVID KAISER
Author, AMERICAN TRAGEDY: KENNEDY, JOHNSON, AND THE ORIGINS OF THE VIETNAM WAR
Jamestown, Rhode Island

SUCKING SOUND

THE TNR EDITORS MOST ADEquately used the term "bounty" in referring to America's NAFTA benefits ("Unfair," March 8). NAFTA has served only to take advantage of cheap labor in foreign countries and blighted border areas of the United States. It does indeed pirate all human and natural resources. We who live along the U.S.-Mexico border have witnessed no successful retraining of American workers, not to mention a total lack of job availability. We have witnessed hundreds of thousands of people flock to the cities from the interior of Mexico in hope of a job, only to see the majority of the factories quickly move to cheaper labor markets. The exodus first went farther into the states and is now overseas. Our borders received little or no help building infrastructure. All of the border communities are without adequate water for future needs, much less any future development. There is no job market along the border, and there is certainly no sharing of any of the bounty pirated by and for the usual handful of the already rich.

MARIA DOLORES RODRIGUEZ
El Paso, Texas

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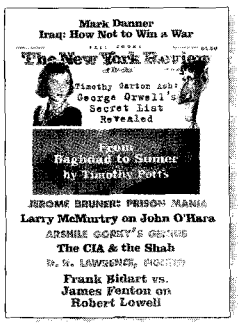

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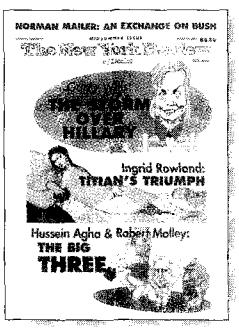

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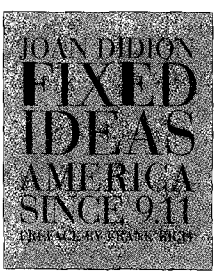

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Wedded

TRB FROM WASHINGTON

CONSIDER THIS POLITICAL puzzle. According to polls, African Americans are more hostile to gay marriage—indeed, to gays in general—than whites. A December 2003 *New York Times* survey found that 75 percent of blacks oppose same-sex marriage, compared with 59 percent of whites. Fifty-eight percent of blacks think sexual orientation "can be changed," according to a November Pew Research Center study, versus 39 percent of whites. And, according to Pew, 60 percent of blacks hold an unfavorable view of gay men, compared with only 50 percent of whites.

Yet, when Mississippi tried to pass an anti-gay-marriage amendment last month, the 17 state representatives who voted no were all African Americans. When Georgia tried to do the same thing, all ten black state senators opposed it. In the Georgia House of Representatives, 30 black legislators voted no and one voted yes (the tally among whites was 116 yes, eleven no). That's despite a Zogby poll showing that black Georgians oppose gay marriage more strongly than do whites.

For many conservatives, the riddle's answer is obvious: Black politicians are out of touch. But, if black politicians were really so dismissive of the views of their constituents, they'd no longer be in office. For decades now, conservatives have touted polls showing that African Americans hold conservative views on gay rights, abortion, the death penalty, and school vouchers. And yet I can't think of a single election in which any of those issues has hurt a liberal black politician among black voters. To suggest that black politicians don't represent their constituents because blacks tell pollsters they dislike gay marriage is like saying Republicans don't represent their constituents because many GOP voters say they prefer education spending to cutting taxes. If politicians keep behaving a certain way, and getting elected, it's a good bet they are getting signals from their constituents that the polls aren't picking up.

One thing the polls don't pick up is black suspicion of the Republican Party. When pollsters ask blacks about gay marriage, they're asking in a relative vacuum. But, when the issue is raised in a state legislature or in a political campaign, its partisan implications are glaringly obvious. And the very fact that the GOP is leading the anti-gay-marriage movement delegitimizes the issue for black politicians and black voters. As State Representative Tyrone Brooks, head of the Georgia Association of Black Elected Officials, explained to *The New York Times*, "This is not about your personal beliefs. It's about a political ballgame the Republicans kicked off." The Reverend Walter Fauntroy, a black former delegate to Congress from the District of Columbia, actually *supports* a federal anti-gay-marriage amendment. Yet, when he went on National Public Radio this February to debate the issue, he prefaced his comments by announcing, "I'm annoyed to have to discuss this issue in an election year, because it's yet another sideshow being used by radical right-wing fiscal and social conservatives to divert attention from the critical issues."

In other words, Republicans hope gay marriage will change blacks' views of the GOP. But those views are so negative that the reverse happens—African Americans transfer their hostility to the GOP to whatever issue the GOP happens to be supporting. This dynamic isn't confined to gay marriage. Polling shows that many blacks support school vouchers. And yet in 2002, when black Democrat Cory Booker ran for mayor of Newark, incumbent Sharpe James cited his flirtation with vouchers as evidence that he was a closet Republican. Which is one reason Booker overwhelmingly lost the city's black vote. (Similarly, many California Latinos told pollsters in 1994 that they supported Proposition 187, which denied benefits to illegal immigrants. But, as the campaign progressed and Republican Governor Pete Wilson became the proposition's public face, Latino support for the measure plummeted.)

Before Republicans can win black votes on cultural issues like gay marriage, they have to change African American views of the GOP in general. Republicans think those views are simply a holdover from the party's past opposition to civil rights. But, in fact, blacks see many of the GOP's *current* core beliefs—on tax cuts and government spending, for instance—as racially tinged, which isn't that surprising given the historical intersection of race and class. As Fauntroy puts it, "When I step outside the door of this church, nobody is going to ask me, 'Rev, what do you think about gay marriage?' That may be a nice discussion in some places, but it isn't on the radar screen here. People are saying 'Lord have mercy, I don't have health care.' " If Republicans stopped trying to redistribute wealth upward (and changed their views on explicitly racial issues like the Confederate flag), blacks might listen to them on gay marriage. But that's like saying that, if Democrats changed their views on abortion, they could win over white evangelicals like Gary Bauer who oppose privatizing Social Security and support raising the minimum wage. You don't win voters over by agreeing with them on issues they consider peripheral; you win them over by agreeing with them on the issues they care about most.

There's one more problem for the GOP. It's not just that blacks get squeamish when gay marriage becomes associated with Republicans; they get squeamish when it becomes associated with government in general. It's one thing to want the government to legislate morality when you're the cultural and racial majority. It's quite another when you're a racial minority with an acute memory of that morality being legislated against you. "I'm a Christian," explained black Georgia State Representative Georganna Sinkfield, "but, if we put this in the Constitution, what's next? People with dark hair? You're opening the floodgates for people to promote their own prejudice." John Simpkins, a political scientist at South Carolina's Furman University, notes that African Americans have also been less willing than whites to restrict the rights of immigrants, even though they are arguably more hurt by immigrant economic competition.

The motivation is similar: Once government turns on one minority, who knows where it will stop? To most Republicans, this logic sounds absurd. And, precisely because it does, the GOP isn't going to win black votes with gay marriage, or any other issue, for a long, long time.

PETER BEINART

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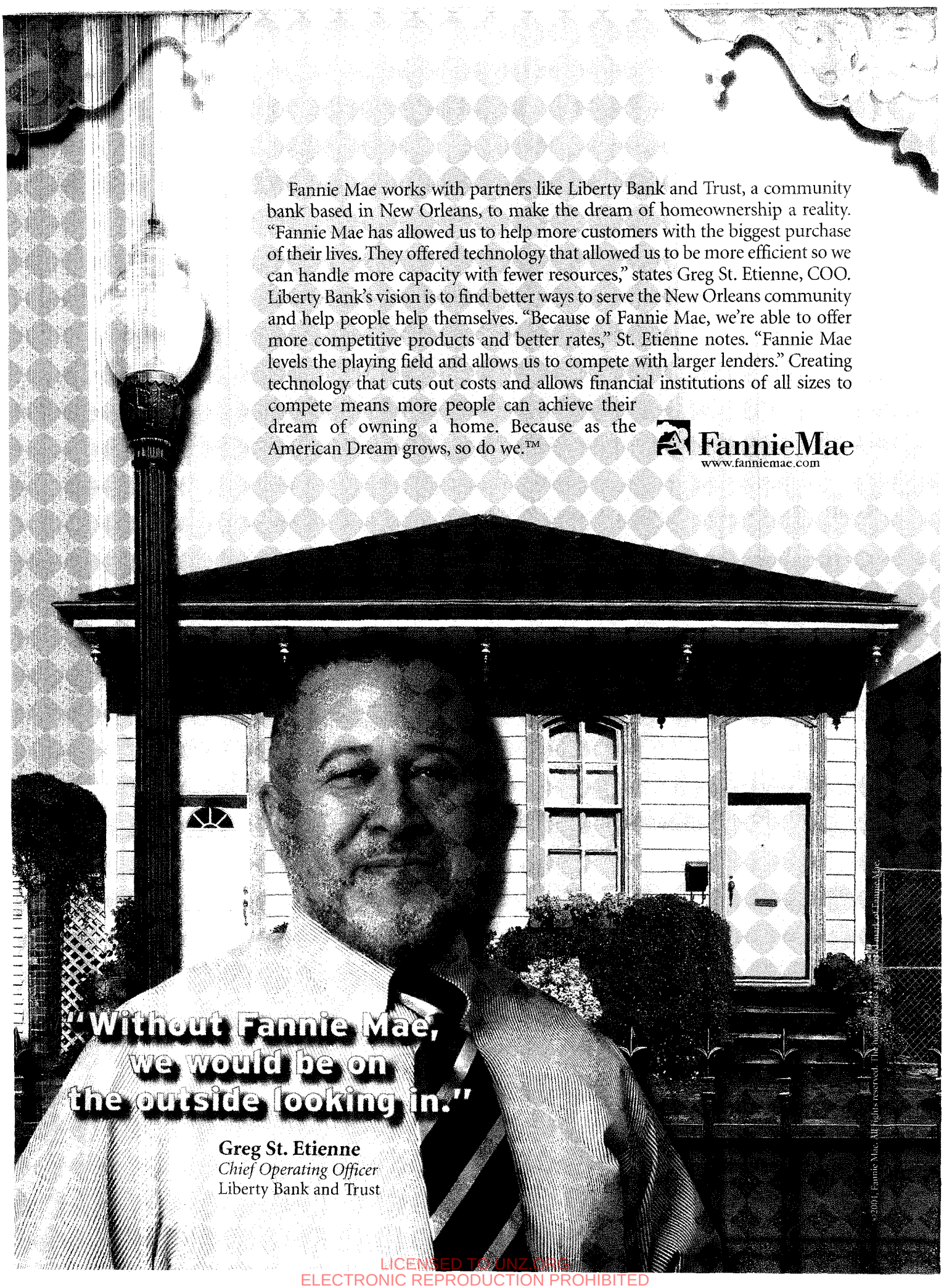

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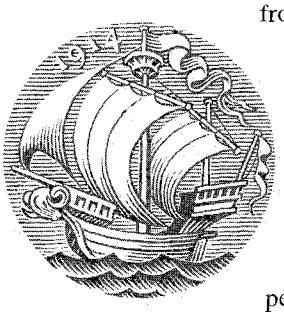
Martyred

IS IT HEARTLESS not to mourn the death of Sheik Ahmed Yassin? No, it is heartless to mourn it. The man was responsible for the slaughter of many, many people; savagery was his principal contribution to history, along with the attempt to transform a political conflict into a religious war. Any American who does not understand Israel's reason for hunting Sheik Yassin down, and for seeking to extirpate the leaders and the capabilities of Hamas, does not understand America's reason for hunting Osama bin Laden down, and for seeking to extirpate the leaders and the capabilities of Al Qaeda. In acting against Sheik Yassin, Israel was not only punishing, it was also preempting.

The parallels are so striking that for Americans an ambivalence about the Israeli action amounts to a kind of moral idiocy about their own predicament. The obtuseness of various European governments and figures in the aftermath of the sheik's murder was not at all surprising; but it was especially discouraging to watch the Bush administration descend, in the course of a single day, from its natural understanding of the necessity of destroying terrorists to a more "diplomatic" and more confused response. This was not obtuseness, this was hypocrisy. Washington's attitude toward Israel was always a measure of the soundness of its philosophical and historical assumptions, and this was never more the case than now, in this epoch of holy terror.

What was most extraordinary, among all the responses to the event, was the pandering to Hamas and its jihadist mobs (which included a 17-year-old boy in Gaza who told a reporter from *The New York Times* that "the fingernail of Sheik Yassin is worth all the Jewish people") by the secular leadership of Palestine. "To heaven, you martyr!": This was Yasir Arafat's message to his people. Ahmed Qurei, the prime minister of the Palestinian Authority, denounced the Israelis for having eliminated a moderate. Don't these allegedly enlightened men grasp that Hamas is their enemy, too? Don't they see that no Palestinian state will be established as long as Hamas retains the power and the prestige to thwart progress with terror, as long as the struggle within the Palestinian world between theocracy and democracy, between violence and politics, between rage and realism, continues to tilt in the direction of the dark elements? There is something contemptible about the lack of self-respect among Palestinian secularists and modernists; and all the people in the land, Palestinians and Israelis, are paying a terrible price for it. By treating the sheik as the supreme *shahid* of Palestine, Arafat and his colleagues have once again prejudiced their people against historical seriousness.



Yet the discussion of Israeli policy cannot end here. The murder of this murderer was certainly justified, but it will certainly not solve the problem of Palestine. It will not even solve the problem of terror. (Who doubts that Palestinian retaliation in Israel's streets is not long away?) A terror policy is not quite a foreign policy. Israel needs more than a security strategy, it needs also a historical strategy. As even some senior members of the Likud now seem finally to recognize, the demographic clock is ticking ruthlessly between the river and the sea, and unless Israel's government takes the need for diplomacy seriously, and prepares itself for a moment of truth about Israeli settlements in the West Bank, Israel will find itself in a crisis even graver than this one. The deadly earnestness of the Sharon government about the physical safety of Israelis is wholly admirable, but its security imagination must be matched by a political imagination.

Sharon's decision to leave Gaza and its settlements is a fine start, if a start it is. Indeed, the campaign against the Hamas leadership in Gaza is the corollary of that act of withdrawal: The terrible emboldening precedent of the withdrawal from Lebanon, which Hezbollah and its admirers in Palestine interpreted as an Israeli retreat, is obviously weighing on Sharon. The establishment of a Hamas ministate in Gaza would hardly count as a blow for peace, and would reproduce the PLO ministate in southern Lebanon that tormented Israel for years. Thus "targeted assassination" turns out to be one of the conditions of a responsible Israeli relinquishment of its dominion over Gaza: This is the kind of complexity that the minds of most peace processors cannot tolerate. But justice is often brutally born. And slowly, too. ■

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NOTEBOOK

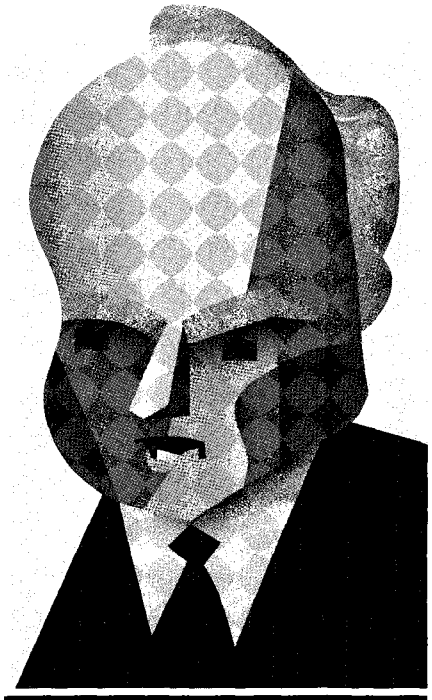
Richard Clarke: Dove, Democrat, Meetings Fetishist

ALL BARK, NO BITE

THE SERIOUSNESS OF RICHARD Clarke's allegations this week was matched only by the comedy of the White House's reaction to them. The former counterterrorism chief has charged that the Bush administration was weak on terrorism before September 11, 2001, and the Bushies' counterattack has been described in the press as a "ferocious assault." But it has been more like an assault by unarmed peasants—the kind czarist Russia used as cannon fodder. Here is a partial guide to the Bushies' unintentionally hilarious responses to Clarke:

He's a partisan Democrat: "His best friend is Rand Beers, who is the principal adviser to the Kerry campaign," asserted White House Press Secretary Scott McClellan. Leave aside the fact that Clarke was a registered Republican who served under three GOP presidents without betraying any signs of Democratic leanings. Instead, consider the bizarreness of the allegation that Clarke is untrustworthy due to his association with Beers, whom *Bush* appointed to head counterterrorism at the National Security Council. Of course, Beers, like Clarke, quit the administration in disgust over its deficient anti-terrorism policy. So Beers, a Bush official who turned against Bush, has become a partisan, and thus Clarke has become a partisan as well, by dint of personal association. If Dick Cheney were to quit the Bush administration in protest, then he too could be dismissed as a disgruntled anti-Bush partisan. Cheney, after all, was friends with Paul O'Neill.

He doesn't know what he's talking about: "[Clarke] was moved out of the counterterrorism business over to the cybersecurity side of things. . . . He wasn't in the loop, frankly, on a lot of this stuff," Cheney told Rush Limbaugh on Monday. Clarke, in this telling, comes across as some sort of lonely computer geek whom the administration briefly allowed to hang around, perhaps out of pity. In fact, he was the anti-terrorism czar until two months *after* September 11. Cheney might remember Clarke being in his office shortly after the attacks or perhaps national security adviser Condoleezza Rice asking Clarke, "OK, Dick, you're the crisis manager, what do you recommend?" or perhaps the scene that afternoon in the White House situation room, when Cheney asked him, "Are you getting everything you need, everybody doing what you want?"



Richard Clarke

He has a strange meetings fetish: Clarke has pointed to his inability to secure high-level meetings on terrorism as the best evidence of the administration's lack of interest in the subject. Bushies have tried to paint this as some kind of irrational fixation. "To somehow suggest that the attack on nine-eleven could have been prevented by a series of meetings—I have to tell you that during the period of time we were at battle stations," asserted Rice. But then McClellan tried to demonstrate the White House's seriousness by arguing that "Doctor Rice, early on in the administration, started holding daily briefings with the senior directors of the National Security Council, of which [Clarke] was one." Apparently, some meetings are more important than others.

He was too soft on Al Qaeda: Clarke vigorously advocated aggressive action to roll back Al Qaeda, but the Bushies have tried to spin his suggestions as a form of appeasement. "We didn't feel it was sufficient to simply roll back Al Qaeda; we pursued a policy to eliminate Al Qaeda," argued McClellan. According to Secretary of State Colin Powell, testifying before the 9/11 Commission this week, "We wanted to move beyond the rollback policy of containment, criminal prosecution, and limited retaliation for specific terrorist attacks. We wanted to destroy Al Qaeda." So now "rollback" is synonymous with "containment," and both are the opposite of "elimination." In fact, as anybody with even a passing familiarity with foreign policy can attest, "rollback" means just the opposite of containment—it is synonymous with "elimination." The administration might want to better arm its peasants.

BAD TRIP

IT'S DIFFICULT TO ARGUE WITH THE Bush administration's avowed aim of a "global democratic revolution," but it is depressingly easy to question its sincerity. The latest reminder of the mismatch between word and deed came last week in Saudi Arabia. On the eve of an official visit to Riyadh by Colin Powell, Saudi authorities rounded up and imprisoned several democracy activists who had formed a human rights group. One detainee, according to jour-

DAVID COWLES

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nalist Elizabeth Rubin, is Mohammad Sayeed Al Tayeeb, whose subversive behavior includes regularly holding discussions with intellectuals in his home. The arrests, however, did not make much of an impression on Powell, who at a press conference praised America's relationship with the Saudi autocracy as "quite strong" while, beside him, Prince Saud Al Faisal dismissed the arrests as "an internal issue." As one Saudi confessed to *The New York Times*, "The authorities want to teach the liberals a lesson that they do not care what America thinks and that they can put them in jail at any time." Lesson accomplished.

CIVIL DISSERVICE

PRESIDENT BUSH MAY BE PUSHING a constitutional amendment to ban gay marriage, but he has always presented himself as an opponent of gay-bashing. After discussing same-sex unions in his State of the Union address, for example, Bush called for tolerance toward gays, pronouncing, "[E]ach individual has dignity and value in God's sight." Alas, someone forgot to tell the Office of Special Counsel (OSC), whose website translates civil service laws into usable rules. As *The Washington Post* reported last week, the OSC has purged its site of all references to "sexual-orientation" discrimination. The OSC told the *Post* it is reviewing its interpretation of anti-discrimination laws. If it trashes the old interpretation, the Bush administration will have arguably reversed at least two decades of civil service protections for gays. If a supervisor now wants to punish a gay employee, there's no longer any explicit language that the employee can cite in response. Gays may have dignity and value in God's sight, just not in the administration's.

DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS

IN OUR MARCH 15 ISSUE, ELISABETH Bumiller's name was misspelled—twice. We apologize for the error. ■

TNR.commentary

Campaign Journal

RYAN LIZZA

THE SCARLET LETTER: This week, the White House released Richard Clarke's resignation letter and suggested it somehow contradicts Clarke's criticism of the administration's terrorism policies. But the letter is perfectly consistent with what Clarke writes in *Against All Enemies*.

Here's a portion of the letter the White House and others seem to believe is so damning: "I will always remember the courage, determination, calm, and leadership you demonstrated on September 11th, first on the video link from STRATCOM and later that day in the PEOC [Presidential Emergency Operations Center]." But notice how Clarke limits his praise to just one specific day. (If I received a letter from one of my colleagues at THE NEW REPUBLIC summing up my tenure, and all it said was, "I will always remember your perceptive article on cotton subsidies," I might wonder about her opinion of the rest of my work.) In his book, Clarke has almost identical praise for Bush's performance on 9/11. He writes: "Immediately following the [Oval Office] address [to the nation], the President met with us in the PEOC, a place he had never seen. Unlike in his three television appearances that day, Bush was confident, determined, forceful."

Clarke's whole complaint with Bush is that, despite what he said on 9/11, he didn't "stay at war until this is done." The next day, he was asking about Iraq. Several weeks later in Afghanistan, Bush didn't send American soldiers to go after Osama bin Laden at Tora Bora. Soon after, intelligence and military assets were being redirected to Iraq. You can say Clarke's criticism is wrong, but there is no inconsistency with praising Bush on 9/11 and condemning his overall approach to terrorism.

And, while we're on the subject of parting letters, why didn't Bush's aides also release the letter Bush sent Clarke? Here's what *The Washington Post* reported in a March 13, 2003, piece about Clarke's retirement: "The present commander-in-chief is said to like Clarke—he sent him a warm, handwritten note and invited him to the Oval Office on Feb. 19 for a goodbye chat."

EASTERBLOGG

GREGG EASTERBROOK

CLOSED FILE: Throughout the NCAA basketball tournaments, you'll hear endless stats about players' heights, weights, shooting, rebounding, and assists. What you won't hear is whether they are graduating. Graduation rates for NCAA scholarship athletes have been somewhat up recently—rising to 62 percent, better than the 60 percent when the organization began keeping statistics in 1984. Graduation rates for African American male basketball athletes are also rising—38 percent of the class that entered school in 1996 eventually walked to "Pomp and Circumstance" versus 28 percent of the entering class of 1995. That's the good news. The bad news is that the NCAA has decided that, in most cases, it will no longer reveal the male African American basketball graduation rates for specific universities.

Officially, this is to "protect privacy," since basketball-scholarship holders are sufficiently few that you can sometimes figure out, from raw data, who it was that never graduated. But the real reason for the policy is to protect the NCAA and those many universities that exploit African American players for ticket sales, making no attempt to provide meaningful educations. Many of the schools are public universities that use public funds and have extremely elaborate disclosure rules on other aspects of race and education but now keep secret the key information about race, education, and athletics.

In 2002, the NCAA men's basketball champion, University of Maryland, was deeply embarrassed by reports it had graduated just 19 percent of its basketball players who entered from 1991–1994. In 2003, the NCAA men's basketball champion, Syracuse University, was deeply embarrassed by reports that in four straight years of entering classes, not a single African American male player ended up graduating. (In the last two years, Syracuse basketball graduation rates for black players have been good.) After the revelations about Maryland and Syracuse, there were calls for action and reform. What's the big reform? Go to the NCAA's site (www.NCAA.org) and check the graduation rates for men's basketball players at virtually any school in the tournament, and you'll find blank spaces and a note stating that "regulations require that these data be suppressed." This seems still more proof that the NCAA's claim to care about education for sports-factory school athletes is transparent pretense. University presidents and alumni booster clubs were upset by all the negative publicity about low graduation rates for African American scholarship basketball players; so, instead of reform, the NCAA now keeps the embarrassing information secret.

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Scalia's big mouth.

Quiet Please

BY JEFFREY ROSEN

THIS WEEK, JUSTICE Antonin Scalia sat out on the Pledge of Allegiance case and refused to recuse himself from a case involving Vice President Dick Cheney's energy task force. On balance, both decisions were perfectly defensible. But the same bullying overconfidence, lack of self-discipline, and failure of judicial temperament that led Scalia to blurt out in advance his views on the Pledge case also marred his overly combative apologia in the Cheney case. Indeed, Scalia's increasing inability to respect the difference between his public role as a judge and his private musings as a pundit suggest that the best thing he could do to answer doubts about his impartiality in the future is simply to keep quiet.

The question in the Cheney case is whether the vice president can be forced to disclose details of the meetings of his energy task force in the spring of 2001. The Sierra Club asked Scalia to recuse himself because he is a friend of the vice president and invited him on a private duck-hunting trip before the Court agreed to hear the case. In an opinion on March 18 justifying his refusal to recuse, Scalia noted that justices have long been friends with executive branch officials (and may well have been appointed because of their friendship) and felt free to continue to socialize with them even when they appeared as litigants before the Court. "While friendship is a ground for recusal of a justice, judge, or magistrate where the personal fortune or the personal freedom of the friend is at issue, it has traditionally *not* been a ground for recusal where *official action* is at issue," Scalia wrote. In other words, if Cheney were sued for sexual harassment in his private capacity, Scalia might be willing to recuse himself, but, because he is being sued for abusing his discretion as the head of the task force, Scalia concludes that no reasonable person can question the justice's impartiality.

In fact, the line between Cheney's personal and official capacity is hardly as bright as Scalia suggests—thanks largely to the Republican assault on executive privilege during the Clinton years. The central question in the Cheney case is whether the U.S. Court of Appeals in Washington, D.C., was correct, in 1993, to hold that Hillary Clinton's decision to include private consultants on her health care task force converted it from a presidential working group, whose deliberations would be protected from disclosure by federal law, into an outside advisory committee, forced to open its deliberations to the public. Now that the shoe is on the other foot, the Bush administration is asking the Supreme Court to overturn the Clinton precedent as a violation of the separation of powers. If the Court decides that what was good for the first lady is good for the vice president, it might conclude that Cheney's decision to include private energy consultants on his energy task force also deprives him of the right to keep its deliberations secret. Scalia insists that a decision along these lines would affect Cheney only in his official capacity—that is, there might be political consequences if it were revealed that he exceeded his authority by including his energy-industry cronies on the task force, but no possibility that his personal reputation or integrity could be affected.

This assumes, of course, a rather firm distinction between Cheney's public and private interests and actions. And it was precisely this distinction that Republicans attacked during the Clinton years. Recall that the entire premise of the Clinton impeachment—the claim that got Paula Jones into Court in the first place—was that Clinton's official misconduct as governor (depriving Jones of her constitutional rights by hitting on her) was severe enough to deprive him of the immunity that presidents can normally expect for their official acts. In his separate opinion in the Jones case, Justice Stephen Breyer shrewdly observed that, since the private and public spheres are now regulated by "increasingly complex sets of statutes, rules and regulations," the distinction between public and private conduct is increasingly elusive. All this calls into question Scalia's attempt to rely so heavily on the embattled distinction and makes his historical analogues seem like the relics of a distant era.

If Scalia had more humility, he might have acknowledged the difficulty of maintaining friendships with executive officials in a post-Clinton era but argued that it is precisely because the distinction between public and private conduct is under siege that it is important not to allow the appearance (rather than the reality) of impropriety to force judicial recusals. Otherwise, as Scalia suggests, a mere allegation of impropriety by the press might be enough to force a justice off any case involving a White House official. But Scalia goes far beyond this modest argument. In page after page, he ridicules his critics, lashes out at the public, and vilifies anyone who might question his motives. Combining self-pity with self-righteousness, he unnecessarily editorializes about the case ("there is nothing illegal or immoral about making 'energy-industry executives' members of a task force on energy; some people probably think it would be a good idea"), blusters against the press ("the implications of this argument are staggering"), and hyperbolically suggests that only a fool or an "investigative journalist" could disagree with him. In the process, he does more to undermine public confidence in his own judicial temperament than did the duck-hunting trip itself.

This is not the first time Scalia's extrajudicial musings have called his judgment into question. He was moved to recuse himself in the Pledge case, which asks the Court to decide whether the insertion of the words "under God" violates the First Amendment, because of a stump speech to the Knights of Columbus last year. In the speech, he asserted glibly that the nation's founders never meant to "exclude

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God from the public forums and from political life," adding that nondenominational acknowledgments of God by the government "reflect the true tradition of religious freedom in America—a tradition of neutrality among religious faiths." (In addition to being inappropriate—Scalia was criticizing a lower-court ruling he should have known would come before the Court—this was a gross oversimplification of a complicated historical debate.) And these polemical musings are not limited to Scalia's extrajudicial speeches; increasingly, he acts more like a pundit than a judge in his opinions as well. In his addendum to the Court's stay of the manual recounts in *Bush* v. *Gore*, Scalia announced that the recount would "cast a cloud upon what [Bush] claims to be the legitimacy of his election." As it turned out, Scalia's prediction was wrong—the manual recount sponsored by the media suggested that the counting standard Gore asked for would have elected Bush, not Gore, increasing rather than undermining Bush's legitimacy. (And, in any event, Bush's legitimacy was affected less by the Court than by September 11, 2001.) But, like the garrulous faculty colleague who can't restrain himself from spouting off on an e-mail list, Scalia couldn't resist putting in his two cents.

Scalia is not the only extremely intelligent judge whose inability to resist expressing any thought that pops into his head has undermined his own effectiveness. Richard Posner, who sits on the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Seventh Circuit, offers another cautionary tale: In a self-congratulatory diary on Slate.com two years ago, Posner provided such a smug account of his diligent work habits and his pragmatic approach to judging that he seemed to vindicate the wildest fears of critics who accuse him of measuring the law purely by its practical consequences. Like Scalia, Posner shows the dangers of judges who succumb to the temptations of punditry. Pundits offer simplified, self-confident, and often partisan assessments of complicated issues. These qualities are the opposite of the judicial virtues—humility, self-abnegation, a tolerance for complexity, and a willingness to acknowledge both sides of an argument. As old hierarchies collapse, many government officials are succumbing to the market pressure to turn themselves into public personalities. (Consider the recent tell-all impulse demonstrated by former administration officials Paul O'Neill and Richard Clarke.) But that's why it's all the more important for judges to preserve their special role in U.S. democracy by resisting these public pressures and restraining themselves.

"One of the reasons that courts are held in generally high esteem is that they are not in the public consciousness very often, and one doesn't see that, lo and behold, they're made up of frail human beings like every other governmental institution," Scalia said in one of the last TV interviews he granted, to C-SPAN in 1986. "Judges ought to make an effort to avoid becoming public figures, because it's not their personalities or their particular viewpoints that they are supposed to be promoting." It's unfortunate that the longer Scalia remains on the bench, the less he follows his own advice. ■

The 9/11 Commission's new fight.

Road Block

BY SPENCER ACKERMAN

RICHARD CLARKE CHOSE a good time to charge the Bush administration with ignoring the threat from Al Qaeda. After all, this week he—and a raft of Bush officials—testifies before a 9/11 Commission dedicated to evaluating just those kind of allegations. Once the Commission releases its report this summer, the nation should have a pretty good idea of which officials, agencies, and administrations took Al Qaeda seriously and which did not.

At least, that's what you'd assume. In fact, it's quite possible the public will never learn whether Clarke is telling the unvarnished truth. Evaluating Clarke's allegations will require the Commission to examine sensitive or classified documents from the National Security Council (NSC) or intelligence agencies. But, as a result, once the Commission completes its report, it will have to negotiate with the White House about which of its findings must remain classified for reasons of national security. As the 2002 congressional investigation into the September 11 attacks showed, this administration considers the national interest to be largely synonymous with President Bush's political interest—and will fight to keep information damaging to the president out of public view. The White House has already clashed repeatedly with the 9/11 Commission—over access to intelligence, interviews with administration officials, and the deadline for the final report—but the struggle over how much of the report the public will get to see, says Commissioner Tim Roemer, will be "one of the battles of Armageddon."

THE WHITE HOUSE will face Armageddon well-prepared. In 2002, the House and Senate Intelligence Committees conducted a joint inquiry into whether U.S. intelligence agencies could have prevented the September 11 attacks. The Committees finished their work in early December after a contentious investigation, during which the White House denied them access to senior-level Bush administration officials, NSC counterterrorism policy documents, and highly classified presidential intelligence digests known as the President's Daily Brief (PDB). But the most pitched battle came when Staff Director Eleanor Hill and her deputy, Rick Cinquegrana, delivered the report to an administration review committee for declassification. They hoped the review would be completed by February 2003, when the joint inquiry's specially hired staff was scheduled to disband. Instead, Bush officials dragged out the declassification process for seven months. "It was *very* difficult, *very* long, and frustrating," Hill remembers.

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The review panel tried to strike significant portions from the joint inquiry report—including information that, if released, posed no conceivable threat to national security. Even material that was already public was put on the chopping block. "At one point, we were told we couldn't use the word 'PDB,' " she says, "until we told them it was already on a CIA website." As the negotiations ran into the spring—and House Intelligence Committee Chairman Porter Goss arranged for Hill and Cinquegrana to continue working beyond the official end of the inquiry—the two staffers were forced to argue for declassification of the report, as Hill recalls, "page by page, word for word." Some issues weren't even open to negotiation, such as the 27-page section on foreign support for Al Qaeda, which intelligence officials succeeded in fully redacting from the report. By the time the declassification was complete in July 2003, though, even such massive redactions felt like a victory for transparency, Hill says: Initially, the review panel had wanted the public version of the nearly 900-page report to appear without any indication that large parts of the narrative had been removed. At a press conference announcing the report's release, both the Democratic and Republican leaders of the joint inquiry denounced the "layer after layer after layer of obstacle," as Goss put it, which Hill and Cinquegrana faced in declassification. "There's a lot of information that's not in here that should be," growled Alabama Republican Richard Shelby. Added California Democrat Nancy Pelosi, "This is especially true with respect to references to sources of foreign support for hijackers," spurring speculation the administration was concealing politically inconvenient evidence of Saudi complicity in the attacks.

For some on the 9/11 Commission, the joint inquiry's past is their prologue. According to Roemer, the only official to serve on both investigations, the declassification issue will confront the Commission "like a brick in the face." It's not hard to see why. After spending months in tense discussions with the White House over access to intelligence reports and senior officials, the Commission endured a three-week standoff with House Speaker Dennis Hastert in February over whether the Commission would receive a two-month extension to its May 26 deadline. Hastert eventually gave in, but he extracted two concessions: first, that the Commission try to finish its report ahead of schedule; and, second, that the Commission conclude all its business—including the declassification process (a process that took the joint inquiry *seven* months)—within a month after the new deadline. This means that, after August 26, the Commission will simply cease to exist. No commissioner or staffer will be empowered to negotiate declassification with the Bush administration, granting the White House tremendous leverage to edit the public version of the report. The likelihood of the administration and the GOP-controlled Congress allowing the Commission a *second* extension to continue haggling over declassification—during a congressional recess and on the eve of the Republican National Convention—is practically nil.

Which is why the Commission's pace has become increasingly frenetic. Commissioners and staffers are reviewing over two million pages of documents and over 1,000 interviews with former officials—and they still need to interview such central players as Presidents Clinton and Bush and Vice Presidents Gore and Cheney. As they work, the fight over how much the public will be able to read is about to begin in earnest. According to Commission spokesman Al Felzenberg, White House Chief of Staff Andrew Card recently convened a declassification committee, though it's not yet clear when it will begin work. Felzenberg is optimistic that the administration's redaction won't be overzealous: "It may well be that certain sources will not be identified ... [or] the most sensitive background material will stay out," he says. Of course, that's what the joint inquiry thought, too, and to date the 9/11 Commission's dealings with the White House have hardly been promising. The Bush administration has tightly controlled any information—from the PDBs to testimony by Bush, Cheney, and national security adviser Condoleezza Rice—that could reveal what the White House knew about the threat from Al Qaeda and how it addressed it.

Furthermore, as with the joint inquiry, it remains to be seen whether the declassified version of the 9/11 Commission's report will indicate that it has been edited. One option is to release a public version of the report written as an uninterrupted text and subsequently issue "classified monographs"—i.e., indexes that call attention to the fact that material was excised from the public version. That doesn't satisfy a watchdog group of family members of September 11 victims known as the Family Steering Committee, who want to make sure any censorship is made clear in the body of the report itself, as in the joint inquiry report. "The final report needs to be one report," says Bill Harvey of the Family Steering Committee, who took his concerns to White House Counsel Al Gonzales this week. "Those sections that are classified need to be visibly redacted." The problem, he concedes, is that "it takes more time to produce one report"—time the Commission doesn't have.

What the Commission does have is the final word. After it finishes its investigation, further information on the attacks—and whether Bush did everything he could to stop them—won't be available until executive branch archives are opened, which, depending on the documents' national security status, might not happen for decades. Indeed, Clarke's testimony may be the last chance to unearth answers tantalizingly hinted at in the joint inquiry's final report. When the Bush administration took office, the inquiry noted, "It appears that significant slippage in counterterrorism policy may have taken place"—slippage that was at least partially "due to the unresolved status of [Richard] Clarke as National Coordinator for Counterterrorism and his uncertain mandate to coordinate Bush Administration policy on terrorism and specifically on [Osama] Bin Ladin." But, since the joint inquiry couldn't review NSC documents or speak to top-level officials, it couldn't be definitive. The 9/11 Commission report could settle the question. Let's hope Americans get to read it. ■

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On the Hill

Strike Out

BY MICHAEL CROWLEY

ON A RECENT morning in early March, the Senate Judiciary Committee convened to protect the American flag from burning, stomping, shredding, and the notion that, as Judiciary Chairman Orrin Hatch put it, "urinating or defecating on the flag is some form of speech." The Committee's Republican majority had carefully assembled the audience for this hearing. The room was filled with dozens of aging veterans, wearing medals and dark red VFW hats. Also in attendance was a hero of perhaps even greater red-state status: NASCAR driver John Andretti, who would testify that "those who desecrate the flag have total disregard for our military."

In other words, the hearing had all the trappings of a perfect, election-year GOP stunt. But then things got a little more complicated. Committee Democrats, such as Richard Durbin of Illinois, noted that Republicans had voted down a Senate amendment increasing veterans' health spending the previous night. "Giving a veteran a flag is not a substitute for giving our vets the quality health care they were promised," Durbin said, causing brows to furrow under those VFW caps. Committee Republicans were furious. GOP Senator Larry Craig of Idaho nearly sputtered with rage as he defensively rambled about shortened lines at a veterans' clinic in Boise and vowed that veterans' spending would eventually be "plussed-up" in the budget process. The cultural issue had become an economic one; Democrats had found a soft spot.

It was a potentially telling moment. For weeks, cocky Senate Republicans have been bragging about their plans to use cultural wedge issues like flag-burning to torment John Kerry. Earlier this month, *The Washington Post* detailed GOP plans for "a series of debates and votes that will highlight the candidates' positions on divisive issues." In *Roll Call* recently, a GOP aide vowed that, "[w]hen John Kerry comes back, we will make [the Senate] the stage to define him." Another warned that the Senate will be filled with legislative "bear traps" for the unsuspecting Massachusetts Democrat.

Nice try. For all their tough talk, Senate Republicans can barely keep themselves organized, much less bring down the Democratic nominee. Indeed, lately it's Senate *Democrats* who have been on the offensive, successfully pressing issues central to Kerry's campaign. Republicans may have cultural issues, but Democrats have economic ones with more resonance among voters. And, if the going ever does get tough, Kerry can simply skip town. Rather than being a quagmire for Kerry, the Senate could serve as a useful campaign tool.

IT'S TRUE THAT the GOP has a long list of dicey cultural issues lined up for Kerry and the Democrats: flag-burning, abortion, gun control, judicial nominations, and, above all, gay marriage. But, while they have some bite, none of these issues ever registers among Americans' top priorities. A recent *New York Times*/CBS poll found that voters' greatest concerns were the economy, jobs and unemployment, and health care—all issues on which Democrats have a major advantage. None of the GOP's supposedly killer issues made any real impression. (In fact, 65 percent of respondents said gay marriage should not even be raised in the presidential campaign.) Democrats, meanwhile, can counterattack with issues of their own that play straight into everyday voter worries: limits on worker overtime, job outsourcing, cheaper prescription drugs, the budget deficit, and the economy in general. When Republicans thrust with a social wedge issue, Democrats can parry with a pointed economic one. "We will make the case that they're not spending time on jobs and health care," says a senior Senate Democratic aide.

Thanks to their issue advantage, Democrats have scored repeated guerrilla victories that play directly into Kerry's campaign message. Earlier this month, for instance, Republicans tried to pass a White House–backed bill replacing U.S. export subsidies ruled illegal by the World Trade Organization with big new tax breaks for business. But, as the *Post* recently put it, "The bill has become a difficult testing ground for Republicans against a Democratic onslaught." GOP leader Bill Frist had to yank the bill after Democrats barraged it with pro-worker amendments and attached an amendment barring federal contractors from outsourcing government jobs abroad (even Frist himself felt compelled to support the amendment). The bill's future prospects don't look much brighter, with Democrats prepared to press amendments on corporate tax shelters, transfers of manufacturing plants overseas, and a Labor Department rule limiting worker overtime-pay rights. All of these are useful Kerry issues. "We see Capitol Hill as an asset for sure," says Kerry's Senate spokesman, Andy Davis, who says the Senate will be "debating [Kerry's] priorities."

More disastrous for Frist and Co. was a vote on gun control earlier this month. When Republicans voted on a bill on March 2 granting the gun industry immunity from lawsuits, it seemed to put moderate Democrats—and Kerry, who has tried to avoid alienating gun owners—on the spot. Instead, it turned into a GOP disaster and a Kerry triumph. Led by the ever cagey Tom Daschle, who actually supported the underlying immunity bill, Senate Democrats managed to attach two anti-gun amendments: an extension of the assault-weapons ban and new background checks for gun-show buyers. Kerry, meanwhile, swooped into Washington to join the debate with an impassioned campaign-style floor speech. ("President Bush needs to tell America's

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police officers why he is not standing on their side," Kerry boomed.) Again, Frist was forced to scuttle the bill, and even Republicans admitted that Kerry had stolen their thunder and recast the debate. "The presence of Kerry, the entry of this into presidential politics, that had some dynamic," Larry Craig, who had sponsored the original bill, grumbled to the *Times*.

The Senate's recent budget resolution proved another embarrassment. With the help of defecting GOP moderates, Democrats won a major symbolic victory with an amendment requiring 60-vote "supermajorities" to pass further tax cuts in the next five years unless offsetting spending or tax cuts can be found. House Republicans will probably kill this provision, but at the likely cost of appearing fiscally reckless—a point Kerry can happily make on the campaign trail. Such defeats are so common that House Republicans openly disdain their Senate colleagues. "We've been able to carry the president's agenda," House Speaker Dennis Hastert recently groused to *National Journal*'s *CongressDaily*. "If the Senate continues to be impotent, then I don't think they'll be very well-prepared to do that."

Part of the GOP's problem is its tiny margin of control in the Senate. And, with deficits ballooning and Bush's approval ratings falling, moderate Republicans have become increasingly willing to defect on votes. Senate GOP leaders have tried to make up for their puny legislative muscle with symbolic theatrics. But even these efforts have fizzled. During the budget debate, for instance, Republican Senator Rick Santorum had hoped to make a show of a so-called "Kerry budget," a cartoonish blueprint for fiscal disaster he'd constructed from Kerry's campaign proposals and written up as an amendment. Santorum wanted to force a Senate vote on his gimmick, but he didn't get a chance to introduce it until after midnight on the night of the debate, when he announced he would withdraw it "in the spirit of comity that we have here at quarter to one in the morning." A few weeks earlier, Senate Republicans (in league with Bush campaign officials) had planned another stunt: a daylong "debate" over the Iraq war that would consist of a long series of coordinated GOP floor speeches defending the president and attacking Democrats as weak-kneed. A calculated leak led to a breathless preview in *The Hill* newspaper the morning of the planned debate explaining that the idea was "to catch Democrats off-guard" and "put the focus on Kerry and stress his seeming vulnerability on national security issues in general and Iraq in particular." Alas, Republicans miscalculated the amount of floor time available to them, and the plan was aborted. When it finally did take place, five days later, Republicans had lost the element of surprise and "nobody paid attention," a senior Senate Democratic aide chuckles.

It is true that Republicans will eventually force some issues onto the Senate floor that Kerry might prefer to avoid. This week, for example, Republicans planned to take up the House-passed Unborn Victims of Violence Act—an opportunistic GOP response to the murder of pregnant Laci Peterson—which would make a fetus classifiable as a "victim" of a federal crime. (Kerry opposes the bill, putting him in awkward conflict with some of Peterson's tabloid-famous grieving relatives.) But, if Kerry wants to dodge such a tough vote, he easily can. He has hardly voted this year, and there's little reason for him to hang around Washington now waiting for the next GOP pie in the face. Some people think Bob Dole's 1996 presidential campaign was destroyed in its infancy when Senate Democrats, led by Ted Kennedy, handed him one legislative humiliation after another on issues like the minimum wage and health insurance. But Dole was majority leader at the time and didn't have Kerry's freedom to escape the Beltway. "He'll be here when he's needed but will spend the bulk of his time out campaigning," Davis says.

Ultimately, then, the GOP's gloating about bear traps seems to amount mostly to psychological warfare. As one senior Senate Democratic aide puts it, "If I were them, I'd be less worried about putting Kerry in political positions on the floor than about not embarrassing themselves." Unfortunately for Republicans, it's already too late for that. ■

The end of the two-war doctrine.

Two for One

BY MARK MAZZETTI

BY THE TIME the first bombs dropped over Baghdad a year ago, Kim Jong Il had already gone underground. Reclusive even when there's not a war on, North Korea's oddball dictator didn't venture out in public during the entire month of March 2003. When he finally emerged in early April, many Kim-watchers speculated that he had feared the war in Iraq might be part of a larger U.S. offensive to take down the entire "axis of evil."

The Dear Leader needn't have bothered hiding—the United States couldn't have fought him if it had wanted to. Sure, Kim may have been spooked by the Navy jets running flight operations off the USS *Carl Vinson* within miles of North Korean airspace. And Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld made repeated pronouncements that Washington's focus on the Middle East still left plenty of troops for other operations. Yet the military's moves, and the defense secretary's words, were just bluster. Inside the Pentagon, there is a growing realization that fighting two wars with overlapping time frames, the doctrine to which the United States has committed itself for the last eleven years, is now

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nearly impossible. As one Army official puts it, "The [Pentagon's civilian] policy folks say that our military is large enough to carry out Operation Iraqi Freedom while simultaneously dealing with North Korea. But, if you put that question to the Joint Chiefs of Staff, they would be pulling their hair out."

This reality has ramifications beyond think-tank symposia and the Pentagon's much-loved PowerPoint presentations. First, backing up diplomacy with the credible threat of force is the coin of the realm for U.S. foreign policy, especially as the United States carries out a global war against terrorism. During the run-up to the Iraq war, Saddam Hussein may have doubted America's stomach for regime change, but he couldn't have doubted America's capability to carry it out. Now, however, with the U.S. military tied up in an Iraq mission of indeterminate length, just how credible are implicit U.S. threats to use force in North Korea—threats that give the Bush administration leverage in its negotiations to dismantle Kim's nuclear arsenal?

More important, if the Bush doctrine is to be taken seriously, it is now conceivable—for the first time since the cold war—that the United States might actually have to fight multiple wars simultaneously. True, few at the Pentagon expect a war against North Korea or Iran anytime soon, especially in light of the hardships that America's venture in Iraq has imposed on the nation's military and its relations with allies abroad. Yet the Bush administration's stated goal of "ending state-sponsored terrorism" leaves plenty of potential U.S. military missions in the years to come. During the heady days immediately after Baghdad's fall, some civilian hawks at the Pentagon even suggested sending the tanks west across the border into Syria. So a clear-eyed assessment of what America's military can actually accomplish is hardly just an academic exercise.

THE STRAINS THE war on terrorism has placed on the post-cold-war military are, at this point, well-documented. Military officials who after the fall of Baghdad were expecting to have just 30,000 American troops in Iraq within six months of the war's end are now projecting troop levels in excess of 100,000 well into the future. The massive rotation currently underway has eight of the Army's ten active divisions on the move, and thousands of Marines are en route to their second Iraq tour because the Bush administration couldn't cajole enough other countries to commit their own troops. Earlier this month, Rumsfeld alerted thousands more National Guard and Reserve soldiers in expectation of more Iraq deployments, and most top officers don't believe such a heavy reliance on the reservists is sustainable over the long term. So it's a myth, they argue, that the U.S. military could heap more operations onto its plate.

According to Pentagon doctrine, however, that plate has plenty of room left. America's military doctrine is spelled out in the Pentagon's Quadrennial Defense Review (QDR). It is the most important strategic assessment the Pentagon produces, outlining the threats the United States should worry about and prescribing how large the military must be to take them on. While it stops short of specifics about how many tanks, planes, and pistols the four branches of the military ought to buy, it offers guidance to the services about how each should spend its share of the Pentagon pie.

The Pentagon began conducting a four-year checkup on the military shortly after the cold war ended, when strategic planners had to cast aside 40 years of war-gaming against the Soviet Union. It was in the wake of Operation Desert Storm's success that the "two major theater war" (2MTW) strategy was born. Instead of preparing to fight World War III on the plains of Germany, the Pentagon adopted a strategy that required the U.S. military to be large enough to carry out two "nearly simultaneous" wars in different theaters of operation. For planning purposes, war-gamers usually imagined the military fighting Iraq and North Korea—the two threats judged most likely to require military force. At a time when both Presidents George H.W. Bush and Bill Clinton were drastically cutting the military, the 2MTW strategy set a floor to keep budget hawks from taking too much money from the war hawks.

Team Rumsfeld came into the Pentagon pledging to overhaul U.S. strategic planning, and, early in their preparations for the 2001 QDR, they began leaking to the press that the two-war strategy—a relic of the Clinton era—would be the first casualty. Yet, despite the hoopla surrounding its release in September 2001, the QDR left much of the status quo in place. In fact, while President Bush campaigned on a platform of cutting overseas missions for a stretched military, his defense team ended up creating more work for the troops. "The Clinton administration left behind a yawning gap between an ambitious strategy and available resources," says Frank Hoffman, a national security analyst and former Marine infantryman. "The 2001 QDR only made this gap worse."

Delivered on September 30, 2001, the QDR makes repeated references to the devastating attacks that occurred two weeks earlier, yet the bulk of the defense strategy had been completed well before a 757 crashed into the Pentagon's facade. Instead of scrapping the two-war strategy, the QDR states that the military must "swiftly defeat aggression in overlapping major conflicts while preserving for the President the option to call for a decisive victory in one of those conflicts—including the possibility of regime change or occupation." In English, this means the U.S. military still has to be able to fight two big wars at once. In one of them, the United States must be able to destroy the enemy's army, kick the enemy's leader out of power, and occupy the enemy's capital. This exact scenario, of course, is currently playing out in Iraq.

But what about the second war, which overlaps with the first? As the QDR envisions things, the military should be able to "hold" another enemy's advance until the Pentagon can wrap up the first war. This means that, if Kim Jong Il had

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decided to flood his troops over the thirty-eighth parallel in 2003, the U.S. and South Korean militaries would have had to keep the North's million-man army at bay until the U.S. military could tidy things up in Iraq. Given that one year later there's no military pullout from Iraq in sight, that's a pretty lengthy "holding" pattern.

The truth is that, had war actually broken out in Korea over the past year, there would have been precious few American troops to fight there. The Pentagon's doctrine "didn't anticipate the world we've lived in since nine-eleven," says defense expert Thomas Donnelly of the American Enterprise Institute. "And it certainly didn't anticipate keeping a commitment of one hundred thousand troops in Iraq for years." The Pentagon's war plan for Korea relies on thousands of Marines to play a large role in the campaign. Yet, last March, 50 percent of the Marine Corps infantry battalions were in the Kuwait desert, along with all the Marine tank and amphibious-assault-vehicle battalions. One Army division is stationed permanently on the Korean peninsula, along with a significant number of Air Force jets and bombers. Yet this is hardly enough to hold off a North Korean advance, which would likely involve hundreds of thousands of infantry pouring over the demilitarized zone, as well as thousands of North Korean special forces landing along the South Korean coastline to sabotage ports, airfields, and communication lines.

EVEN BEFORE THE Iraq war began, many top officers believed the two-war strategy was more than the Pentagon could handle. The Joint Chiefs ran extensive computer war games last year testing the two-conflict scenario. As one general who participated in the games told me recently, "The second war was always a high risk"—that is, the Chiefs believed it would be difficult to complete the mission with the forces at their disposal. One source on the Army staff explains it this way: "Rumsfeld likes to talk about places where we can 'accept risk.' Another way to put it is places where we could end upon our ass."

And these games assumed that the postwar military commitments in Iraq would be far less onerous than they have turned out to be. After the fall of Baghdad, when the messy realities of occupation set in, the Pentagon ran another set of war games to determine how much an extended military commitment in Iraq would stretch American forces. Once again, however, Rumsfeld's civilian policy staff set the parameters of the war games, building in far more optimistic assumptions about the Iraq occupation than military planners felt were realistic.

To be sure, military commanders are often criticized—sometimes correctly—for making overly conservative judgments about the number of troops needed to carry out missions. Rumsfeld rejected General Tommy Franks's initial war plan for Iraq, for example, when it called for more than 250,000 troops to knock out Saddam's regime. As it turns out, the ground force that made it to Baghdad in less than three weeks totaled not much more than 90,000 soldiers and Marines. At the same time, however, Army Chief of Staff General Eric Shinseki was famously rebuked by Deputy Defense Secretary Paul Wolfowitz after Shinseki told Congress that the postwar occupation force would need to be "several hundred thousand" strong. The American troop level in Iraq has never gotten much higher than 150,000, yet there is near-universal consensus in the military that this number should have been far larger. Inside the Pentagon, some refer to the military's ongoing struggle to pacify Iraq as "Shinseki's revenge."

AND THE MILITARY doesn't only need to worry about fighting big wars. The Rumsfeld defense strategy also calls for a military big enough to handle homeland security missions and smaller-scale operations, such as the recent deployment of Marines to Haiti. On top of that, the 2001 QDR calls for "deterring forward" around the globe. In other words, doing things like keeping aircraft carriers in hot spots and creating new forward operating hubs in East Africa, Central Asia, and West Africa to show the flag, gather intelligence, work with other militaries on counterterrorism, and send troops to local crises.

This is a tall order for a military one-third smaller than it was during the Reagan era. Top officers in the Army—the service usually left handling the messy peacekeeping and occupation missions—are especially concerned that the strategy/resource mismatch will lead thousands of overdeployed soldiers to leave the military forever when their terms of duty expire. On the day he retired as Army chief of staff, Shinseki delivered a not-so-subtle shot at his old nemesis Rumsfeld. "Beware the twelve-division strategy for a ten-division Army," the mild-mannered general told the assembled crowd at Fort Myer during his farewell address.

Nobody, not even Rumsfeld, denies that the U.S. military is greatly strained by Iraq. Yet, as Rumsfeld has argued on many occasions, the strain is only short-term—a "spike" that will subside once the U.S. commitment in Iraq wanes. But the U.S. military will have significant obligations in Iraq and Afghanistan for years. Troop levels may decrease, but the United States has rarely completely broken free of any military commitment abroad, as the hundreds of thousands of American troops in Germany, Japan, South Korea, Bosnia, and Kosovo testify. Not surprisingly, after years of denying that the military needs to be larger, the defense secretary recently authorized an "emergency" increase of 30,000 in the Army's size—but only for the next four years.

The military is short not only soldiers and Marines, but a collection of what the Pentagon calls "low-density/high-demand assets." Or, as Rumsfeld translates, "those things we didn't buy enough of." These are troops with certain skill sets along with equipment like drone aircraft and military cargo planes that have been especially overworked since the war on terrorism began. On the human side, the Army has a severe shortage of civil affairs troops, the soldiers who

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run hearts-and-minds operations around the globe to help project a kinder, gentler image of the U.S. military. On a trip to East Africa last year, I spent time with an Ethiopia-based civil affairs team that was building schools, medical clinics, and wells near the Somalian border. One critical part of their mission was to gather intelligence about local Al Qaeda activity. The soldiers were earnest and hardworking but out of their element. All were reservists from Miami, normally dispatched on missions in Latin America. Fluent in Spanish, none spoke any of the languages common in East Africa.

The Pentagon also "didn't buy enough" Special Operations troops. Especially valuable and especially overworked are classified commando units, such as the Army's Delta Force and the Navy's special warfare development group. Right now, these covert units are keeping busy as part of Task Force 121, a secret unit scouring the mountains of Afghanistan looking for Osama bin Laden. With these super-secret commandos thus engaged, President Bush might want to think twice before making a move against North Korea. Because, if Kim Jong Il were to head back underground, there might be nobody left to go get him. ■

The Web won't topple tyranny.

Dictatorship.com

BY JOSHUA KURLANTZICK

VIENTIANE, LAOS

LAST SPRING, DURING a trip to Laos, I visited an Internet café in the capital, Vientiane. Inside, the scene reminded me more of the West Village than the heart of a backward, communist nation. Though Laotians threshed rice by hand just a few miles away, the café itself was thoroughly modern. Tourists and local teenagers surfed the Internet on relatively new PCs. On a large screen on one wall, music videos featured Madonna gyrating half-naked. Below, kids seated at a row of computers logged onto pop-culture sites like MTV.com.

Yet, despite its trendiness and high-tech appearance, the Internet joint conspicuously lacked one element usually associated with café life: any discussion of current events. Virtually no one in the café spoke with anyone else. Except for the tourists, no one seemed to venture onto news Web pages—this, despite the fact that many Laotians can read Thai and could have accessed uncensored information on news sites based in neighboring (and democratic) Thailand. When I attempted to access the Web pages of exile groups opposed to the authoritarian Vientiane regime, I received an error message saying the pages were not accessible.

My experience in the Vientiane café was a sobering antidote to a pervasive myth: that the Internet is a powerful force for democracy. For years, a significant subset of the democratization industry—that network of political scientists, think tanks, and policymakers—has placed its bets (and, in many cases, its money) on the Web's potential to spread liberal ideas in illiberal parts of the world. Whereas once American politicians and democratization groups focused on older technologies, such as radio, today their plans to spread democracy rest in considerable part on programs for boosting Internet access. In early March, Secretary of State Colin Powell told Congress that a crucial part of the Bush administration's democratization initiative will be establishing "American corners" in libraries overseas, complete with Internet kiosks where locals can surf the Web. In the Middle East, American diplomats have touted their recent online interactions with locals, such as Web dialogue between the American consul in Jeddah and Saudis.

But world leaders, journalists, and political scientists who tout the Internet as a powerful force for political change are just as wrong as the dot-com enthusiasts who not so long ago believed the Web would completely transform business. While it's true that the Internet has proved itself able to disseminate pop culture in authoritarian nations—not only Laos, but China, Singapore, Saudi Arabia, and elsewhere—to date, its political impact has been decidedly limited. It has yet to topple—or even seriously undermine—its first tyrannical regime. In fact, in some repressive countries the spread of the Internet actually may be helping dictatorships remain in power.

EVER SINCE THE Internet became a mass medium in the mid-'90s, its advocates have been touting its political potential. In a 1996 appearance at the World Economic Forum in Davos, John Perry Barlow, co-founder of one of the leading Internet freedom organizations, delivered an address titled "Declaration of the Independence of Cyberspace." In it, he announced, "The global social space we are building" will "be naturally independent of the tyrannies [that governments] impose on us." Other leading political theorists, such as Harvard's Joseph Nye, argued that, by increasing information flows within and between countries and providing a space for political organization, the Internet would threaten dictators.

With the gauntlet laid down, the Internet became a new focus of America's foreign policy elite. Political science

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departments began hiring faculty with backgrounds in both political theory and computer science. The National Democratic Institute and other democratization groups in Washington made seminars on utilizing the Web for political discourse a central part of their agenda. In a 1995 study, the Pentagon predicted the Internet would prove a "strategic threat to authoritarian regimes." In 2000, President Clinton told reporters that, "in the new century, liberty will spread by ... cable modem" and memorably warned that, if China's leaders attempted to crack down on the Web, they would find it as difficult as "trying to nail Jell-O to the wall." In 1999, then–presidential candidate George W. Bush confidently predicted that, if the Internet were to take hold in China, "freedom's genie will be out of the bottle."

Since taking office, the Bush administration has focused on programs to expand Web access in the Middle East, such as funding for Internet connections in Arab schools. Margaret Tutwiler, undersecretary of state for public diplomacy and public affairs, recently told Congress that such efforts would help provide people in the Middle East with "a window on the world. ... It opens up a whole lot of avenues that I think are in our self-interest." Edward Djerejian, chairman of the White House advisory group on public diplomacy, testified that, "given the strategic importance of information technologies, a greater portion of the budget should be directed to tap the resources of the Internet."

Academics and journalists, too, have bought into the idea, frequently pointing to increased Internet usage as de facto evidence of political liberalization. "The Internet and globalization," wrote *The New York Times*' Thomas Friedman in 2000, "are acting like nutcrackers to open societies and empower Arab democrats." A year later, when Bashar Assad became president of Syria, the fact that he had once headed a Syrian computer group was taken as evidence that he might be a liberalizer. Saudi Arabia is the most recent beneficiary of this kind of misunderstanding, with media reports crediting the desert kingdom with liberalization based on its burgeoning Internet culture. This March, *The Economist* enthused, "The Internet, the mobile phone and satellite television are all eroding the [Saudi] authorities' control."

But little of this excitement is predicated on empirical research. It's true, of course, that Internet usage has surged in many authoritarian nations. In China, the number of people accessing the Web on a regular basis has risen from fewer than one million in 1997 to almost 70 million in 2003. In the Middle East, Internet penetration has nearly doubled in the past five years. It's also true that this increased access has provided some citizens of dictatorships more access to the outside world and helped loosen restrictive cultural norms. By prompting more open discussion of sexuality, for instance, foreign websites may make it easier for Southeast Asian youngsters to talk frankly about sex—a life-and-death proposition in a region decimated by HIV/AIDS.

Yet the growth of the Internet has not substantially altered the political climate in most authoritarian countries. In quasi-authoritarian Singapore, where more than 50 percent of the population has regular Internet access, the ruling People's Action Party actually increased its political stranglehold in the last election, winning more than 95 percent of the seats in the legislature. In Malaysia, another country where Internet access is much higher than in most of the developing world, the ruling United Malays National Organization, which has been in power for over two decades, dominated this week's national elections. The State Department's March report on human rights in Burma says, "The Government's extremely poor human rights record worsened. ... Citizens still did not have the right to change their government." And its annual report on human rights in China, also released in March, said that last year saw "backsliding on key human rights issues" by Beijing—such significant backsliding that the United States is considering censuring China at the U.N. Human Rights Commission. Indeed, nearly all the Chinese political science professors I have spoken with agree that the mainland Chinese democracy movement is weaker now than it was a decade ago. Nor is this unhappy trend limited to the Far East. Since March 2003, the Cuban government has initiated its biggest crackdown on dissent in years. Neither Cuba nor such Middle Eastern nations as Saudi Arabia, Egypt, and Syria have made any recent progress toward democracy, according to Freedom House's 2004 ranking of countries around the world.

Why has the Web failed to transform such regimes? In part because, as a medium, the Web is in many ways ill-suited for expressing and organizing dissent. And, even more significantly, because, as a technology, it has proved surprisingly easy for authoritarian regimes to stifle, control, and co-opt.

MANY INTERNET ADVOCATES forget that, on the most basic level, the Web is a vehicle merely for disseminating information. Someone, in other words, first needs to have access to the information and a willingness to share it. In practice, this means the impact of the Web depends to a certain degree on local resources—specifically, the existence of opposition networks able to provide evidence of government wrongdoing. This limitation is evident when one compares Malaysia with Singapore. "The Internet has had more impact on politics in Malaysia than in Singapore," says Cherian George, who is writing a book on Internet usage in Southeast Asia. There are several nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) in Malaysia committed to investigating the government; in Singapore, there are virtually none. As a consequence, when activists in Malaysia want to use the Web to highlight human rights abuses, George says, they can draw upon the information amassed by the NGOs from their networks of sources. Singaporeans, by contrast, have no such resources. This is part of the reason James Gomez, founder of the well-known Singaporean dissident website ThinkCentre.org, admits that his organization has not significantly altered local politics by using the Internet.

Another shortcoming of the Internet is that it lends itself

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to individual rather than communal activities. It "is about people sitting in front of a terminal, barely interacting," says one Laotian researcher. The Web is less well-suited to fostering political discussion and debate because, unlike radio or even television, it does not generally bring people together in one house or one room. In Rangoon, the capital of Burma—one of the most repressive nations on earth—groups of men often crowd around radios in tea shops to clandestinely listen to news from the BBC's Burmese service and then discuss what they've heard. Similarly, in bars and cafés in China, people gather around televisions to watch and discuss the news. But, while restaurateurs in the developing world can afford to use a radio or television to lure customers who might have a snack while listening or watching, owners of Internet cafés have to recoup their much higher capital investments. They do this by dividing their establishments into individual terminals and charging each user separately. In fact, in nearly every Internet café I have visited, in Vientiane last year and in Rangoon this winter (as well as in New York and in London), I have watched the same scenes of people sitting in front of individual computer terminals, barely talking to each other.

Add to this a still more simple fact about the Internet—that, unlike television or radio, it generally requires users to be literate—and it's not hard to see why democracy advocates in authoritarian countries (and some authoritarian leaders) consider older, broadcast media to be a more effective means of disseminating information and fostering debate. Wang Dan, a well-known Chinese democracy activist, has argued that television and radio are still the best means for communicating dissident messages within China. Western diplomats in Laos concur, telling me that Thai television, available to many Laotians, has more potential than the Internet to subvert the authoritarian Laotian government. Likewise, in the Middle East, Islamist organizations—the only groups that have had much success challenging authoritarian regimes in the region—have largely disdained the Web, relying instead on clandestine videos and audiocassettes, which can be watched communally and then passed along from mosque to mosque.

In addition to lending itself primarily to individual use, the Internet also fosters a kind of anarchy inimical to an effective opposition movement. Singaporean dissident Gomez says the Web empowers individual members of a political movement, rather than the movement as a whole. Opposition members can offer dissenting opinions at will, thus undermining the leadership and potentially splintering the organization. In combating an authoritarian regime, in other words, there's such a thing as too much democracy. Two of the most successful opposition movements of the last few decades—the South African opposition led by Nelson Mandela and the Burmese resistance led by Aung San Suu Kyi—relied upon charismatic, almost authoritarian leaders to set a message followed by the rest of the movement. The anti-globalization movement, by contrast, has been a prime example of the anarchy that can develop when groups utilize the Web to organize. Allowing nearly anyone to make a statement or call a meeting via the Web, the anti-globalizers have wound up with large but unorganized rallies in which everyone from serious critics of free trade to advocates of witches and self-anointed saviors of famed death-row convict Mumia Abu Jumal have their say. To take just one example, at the anti-globalization World Social Forum held in Mumbai in January, nuanced critics of globalization like former World Bank chief economist Joseph Stiglitz shared space with, as *The New York Times* reported, "a long list of regional causes," including anti-Microsoft and anti–Coca Cola activists.

But the Internet's inherent flaws as a political medium are only part of the reason for its failure to spread liberty. More significant has been the ease with which authoritarian regimes have controlled and, in some cases, subverted it. The most straightforward way governments have responded to opposition websites has been simply to shut them down. In Singapore, for example, an online political forum called Sintercom became popular in the mid-'90s as one of the only places where citizens could express political opinions relatively openly. But, following government pressure, Sintercom was shut down in 2001. Since then, according to Shanthi Kalathil and Taylor C. Boas, authors of the recent comprehensive book *Open Networks, Closed Regimes: The Impact of the Internet on Authoritarian Rule*, the scope of online political discussion in Singapore has shrunk. In Malaysia, too, many of the anti-government websites that formed in the mid-'90s have been shuttered, enabling the regime to beat back a liberal reform movement that sprang up five years ago.

But nowhere has a regime's ability to corral the Internet been more apparent than in China, the world's largest authoritarian state. Despite President Clinton's prediction, Beijing has proved that it can, in fact, nail Jell-O to the wall. A 2003 study by Jonathan Zittrain and Benjamin Edelman, two Harvard researchers, found that China has created the most extensive system of Internet censorship in the world and has almost completely controlled the impact of the Web on dissent. It has done this, they note, by mandating that all Web traffic go through government-controlled servers and by constructing an elaborate system of firewalls—which prevent access to certain websites—and online monitoring by state security agents. Censored sites include much of the Western media and sites related to Taiwan, democratization, and other sensitive topics. (*The New York Times* won a reprieve only when its former editor appealed personally to former President Jiang Zemin.) In their book, Kalathil and Boas note that Saudi Arabia has constructed similarly comprehensive systems to limit online dissent, expanding their "censorship mechanism to keep pace with the burgeoning sources of objectionable content." What's more, various authoritarian regimes have collaborated with one another to improve their ability to control the Web. As Kalathil and Boas note, China is formally advising Cuba on its Internet policies, while

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several Middle Eastern states have looked to Singapore as an example in controlling their citizens' Web usage.

In such efforts, authoritarian regimes have also benefited from the willingness of Western companies to sell the latest censorship technology. Cybersecurity companies, such as San Jose–based Secure Computing, have competed intensely to sell Web-filtering and -monitoring technology to Riyadh, Beijing, and other repressive governments. One vice president of Websense, a San Diego company that competed for the Saudi contract, told the *Times* in 2001 that it would "be a terrific deal to win." Unsurprisingly, these companies have not made a similar effort to provide cash-poor dissidents in these nations with technology that could enable them to overcome firewalls or conceal their online identities. In a 2002 study, Michael Chase and James Mulvenon, two RAND researchers, found that the Chinese authorities were able to prevent Internet users from accessing anti-monitoring technology 80 percent of the time.

China also has co-opted its own local Internet content providers. In 2002, the country's leading Web entrepreneurs signed a pledge vowing to promote self-discipline in Web usage and encourage "the elimination of deleterious information [on] the Internet." Some of these Internet entrepreneurs are former dissidents who fled China after the 1989 Tiananmen uprising but have since abandoned their political activism, returning to China seeking Web fortune. In fact, as Kalathil and Boas note, "Many of China's up-and-coming Internet entrepreneurs see a substantial ... role for the government in the Internet sector. ... [They] have visions for Chinese Internet development that are inherently pragmatic and complementary to state strategy." So much for Barlow's idea that technology workers will reject the "tyrannies" of government.

In the past two years, as authoritarian regimes have become more sophisticated in controlling the Web, many of them have been able to leverage that control to create climates of online self-censorship. According to Nina Hachigian, an expert on China at the Pacific Council on International Policy, the knowledge that the Chinese government monitors online activity, combined with Internet laws so broad they could apply to almost any Web surfer, effectively scare most users into avoiding political sites altogether. As Gary Rodan, a Southeast Asia specialist at Murdoch University in Australia, notes in an essay on Singapore in *Political Science Quarterly*, "When extensive networks of political surveillance are already in place and a culture of fear about such practices exists, the impact of monitoring is likely to be strong."

To maintain this fear, Internet cops in China launch periodic crackdowns on the Web, arresting and prosecuting Chinese citizens for posting Web items related to democracy or to helping people evade firewalls. Beijing also has shuttered thousands of Internet cafés over the past four years. On a visit to Shanghai in 1999, I noticed numerous new cafés. By 2003, many had been closed. Other authoritarian regimes have used similar bullying tactics to foster climates of self-censorship online. Singapore also has drafted broad Internet laws that could implicate many Web users and, Kalathil and Boas report, has reinforced citizens' paranoia by occasionally arresting people for posting articles critical of the government and by periodically reminding the public that the country's one Internet service provider, which is connected the government, snoops through users' Web accounts. The Vietnamese government has made owners of Internet cafés responsible for anything users post online and has made a series of arrests over the past two years of people who posted dissident articles. In January, Hanoi sentenced a man who used the Web to criticize the Vietnamese government to seven years in prison.

EVEN BEYOND ITS failure to live up to democratizers' dreams, the Web may actually be helping to keep some dictatorships in power. Asian dissidents have told me that the Web has made it easier for authoritarian regimes to monitor citizens. In Singapore, Gomez says, the government previously had to employ many security agents and spend a lot of time to monitor activists who were meeting with each other in person. But, with the advent of the Web, security agents can easily use government-linked servers to track the activities of activists and dissidents. In fact, Gomez says, in recent years opposition groups in Singapore have moved away from communicating online and returned to exchanging information face-to-face, in order to avoid surveillance.

In China, the Web has similarly empowered the authorities. In the past two decades, Beijing's system of monitoring the population by installing informers into businesses, neighborhoods, and other social institutions has broken down—in part because the Chinese population has become more transient and in part because the regime's embrace of capitalism has meant fewer devoted Communists willing to spy for the government. But Beijing has replaced these legions of informers with a smaller group of dedicated security agents who monitor the Internet traffic of millions of Chinese. "The real problem with groups trying to use the Internet is that you are actually more easily monitored if you use online forms of communication than if you just meet in person in secret," one specialist in Chinese Internet usage told me. Indeed, in May 2003 Beijing's security services imprisoned four people for "inciting the overthrow of the Chinese government"; press reports suggested the authorities learned about the dissidents' movements through reports on pro-democracy websites. Later, in February of this year, Beijing charged Du Daobin, a well-known Internet dissident, with "inciting subversion of state power and the overthrow of China's socialist system."

In the Middle East, security services have used the Internet in similar ways. In Egypt, police once had to conduct time-consuming stakeouts of bars and clubs to find gay men breaking the laws against homosexuality. Yet, in 2002, the Associated Press reported that a group of state security agents went "online masquerading as gay men ... [and] ar-

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rested men . . . who responded to the ads." In its most recent annual report on human rights in Egypt, the State Department noted, "Egyptian police have continued to target homosexuals using Internet-based sting operations."

What's more, authoritarian regimes have begun flooding the Web with their own content, using high-profile websites to actually increase support for the government. Kalathil and Boas report that e-government services "are likely to boost regime legitimacy, particularly in countries [like Singapore and China] where the state has traditionally offered extensive services [such as social welfare programs] in exchange for political support." Singapore has indeed developed one of the most extensive e-government sites in the world, and Hachigian's research shows that nearly one-tenth of all sites in China are directly related to the Beijing regime. Some of these sites, such as the e-government sites for Beijing municipality, are very sophisticated and include sections in which citizens can e-mail Beijing's mayor with suggestions. (There is little evidence, however, that the mayor feels any need to respond to or even read the submissions.)

Dictators also have poured money into the websites of state-linked media outlets, helping to make them more appealing than their independent competitors. Gomez says that *The Straits Times*, the government-linked newspaper in Singapore with the most sophisticated and comprehensive website, is where nearly everyone in Singapore goes for news. Similarly, the *People's Daily*, a leading party publication in China, now has a very sophisticated Internet presence and has become a leading source of news for wired Chinese. Its chat rooms have become notorious for their nationalistic sentiment—partly the consequence of security bureau Beijing agents logging into the rooms and posting xenophobic statements. Indeed, during crises like the China-U.S. spy-plane incident in 2001 and the run-up to last week's election in Taiwan, Beijing has utilized these chat rooms to whip up patriotic sentiment.

In the long run, the Internet may fulfill some of its hype as an engine of liberalization. Gomez told me that small civil society groups that do not attract as much attention from state security agents—professional organizations, charities, religious groups—are where the Internet's true potential is likely to be. Not, in other words, with groups pushing for regime change. Chinese environmental organizations provide an example of how smaller groups can benefit: These single-issue groups, which normally focus on one environmental problem, have used the Web to coordinate meetings. What's more, by empowering small companies, the Web may decrease state control of the economy. In *New Media, New Politics? From Satellite Television to the Internet in the Arab World*, a recent study of technology in the Middle East, Jon Alterman reports that, in countries like the Persian Gulf states, the spread of the Web may allow small, nimble entrepreneurs to challenge the massive, state-linked companies that have been the foundations of autocratic regimes.

While recognizing that the Internet is not developing into the political tool many had predicted, governments and private companies could help promote the Web's gradual emergence as a force for change. In the House of Representatives, Christopher Cox has sponsored legislation to allow U.S. companies to more easily export encryption technology, which lets Internet users send coded messages that cannot be monitored by central governments. Other legislators have proposed a U.S. Office of Global Internet Freedom designed to facilitate the reform of Internet policies around the world. Most important, the private sector could push regimes not to crack down on Internet freedoms. Such an idea is not wishful thinking. China, Malaysia, Singapore, and other authoritarian states desperately want to prove that they are modern, First World nations, and mastering the Internet is essential to this image. Malaysia has built a massive "Multimedia Super Corridor" in an attempt to create a local version of Silicon Valley, while Singapore has promoted itself as an "Intelligent Island" hardwired into the Web. Consequently, foreign companies can have some influence over dictators, since, without their assistance, authoritarian regimes cannot realize their pretensions of modernity. According to *The New York Times*, John Kamm, the former head of Hong Kong's American Chamber of Commerce, once gave a speech at a banquet for Zhou Nan, Beijing's senior representative in the city, in which he asked Zhou to push for the release of a prominent student detained during the Tiananmen Square protest. Though in public Zhou reacted icily to Kamm's request, a month later the student was released.

But neither Western governments nor Western companies seem likely to step up to the plate. Since the war on terrorism began, the Bush administration has been at pains not to ruffle Beijing's feathers. (Indeed, in an ironic twist, the White House is now considering Web-surveillance techniques similar to those utilized by the Chinese government.) Meanwhile, as the information-technology sector continues to struggle, most tech companies are unwilling to risk alienating potential clients, such as the Chinese government. In part, this eagerness to jump into bed with Beijing and Riyadh reflects the economic reality of a sector no longer in a state of permanent expansion. And, in part, it represents the transition of the Web from a technology run by civil-libertarian geeks like Barlow to one dominated by relatively conservative, large corporations. "In the mid-1990s, there was this feeling among the Web's early users that it had to be a medium to promote freedom," says author George. "But companies like AOL, they don't share that commitment—they focus on entertainment." Indeed, Yahoo! and America Online have both willingly censored their news content to please authoritarian regimes like China. "I haven't seen any businesses pushing governments in this way," Gomez told me. "People are giving up on the idea of the Internet as a frontier for freedom." ■

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BOOKS & THE ARTS

STANLEY KAUFFMANN ON FILMS

The Manufactured Dream

THE TITLE OF MICHEL GONDRY'S film is a clear signal. **ETERNAL SUNSHINE OF THE SPOTLESS MIND** announces that this picture means to be both eccentric and important. A second signal is more subtle. The film's first shot is of a man sleeping, waking, getting up. Ordinary enough. Why, then, is the camera trembling? Why did the director use a handheld camera for this commonplace start? The film that follows is an explanation, and something more.

ETERNAL SUNSHINE OF THE SPOTLESS MIND
(Focus)

A third signal in *Eternal Sunshine*, even odder, is that, after the first two hints of strangeness, the story does not begin strangely. The oldest Hollywood plot blueprint is boy meets girl, boy loses girl, boy gets girl, and *Eternal Sunshine* is so obedient to the first part of that blueprint that it is baffling. Why have we had those two odd opening signals? The screenplay is by Charlie Kaufman, known for his bizarre ideas: *Being John Malkovich* and *Adaptation*, both praised by others, were certainly offbeat. Not here, in the beginning. But just as we start to wonder if Kaufman has succumbed to convention, his screenplay lurches off the well-worn road.

A thirtyish man named Joel lives on Long Island and commutes to a job in Manhattan. One day, moody because of woman troubles, he unexpectedly bolts from the station platform where he is waiting for his New York–bound train and scoots over to the other platform for a train headed to Montauk, on the eastern end of Long Island. On the lonely wintry Montauk beach he sees a young woman walking past him. They do not speak, but soon they encounter each other accidentally in a diner, on the station platform, and on the otherwise empty return train. We can almost hear the plot needles clicking, especially since the dialogue is 1930s-cute, spiced with mod candor. Her name, we learn, is Clementine. She and Joel hit it off very well, with the requisite flurries of hesitation. We follow them rapidly through a considerable period of intimacy, but the 1930s formula gets a jolt. By the time the film's opening titles appear, they are breaking up. No terrible quarrel, they are just breaking up.

Thus the boy-meets-girl Part One of the pattern is quickly hemstitched, and Part Two begins. So do Joel's troubles. He has not forgotten Clementine, but she has completely forgotten him—scientifically. Clementine has had all knowledge of Joel erased from her mind by a new electronic procedure: when he and she meet one day in the bookshop where she works, she treats him cordially enough, but unfamiliarly.

Kaufman's story now zooms into science fiction as we learn about Dr. Howard Mierzwiak, a brain specialist who has perfected a system of mental erasure. The doctor advises the unhappy Joel to erase his memories of Clementine: then all will be well, or at least even. With the doctor's new process, he will induce Joel's mind to revisit all his experiences of Clementine and annul them one by one. Desperate, curious, Joel agrees.

Part Two is, for the most part, the Clementine-erasure in Joel's brain, and it is here that the film becomes its true self. From this point until the finish, most of *Eternal Sunshine* exists inside Joel's head, in the nebulous, the evanescent, the scary blendings, the ludicrous reversals, the anxieties, the wish fulfillments of dreams. Joel revisits snatches of his life with Clementine in somewhat distorted form, as the doctor's process is rubbing her out of his mind. He is with her in the bookshop, and suddenly she vanishes from the shot; objects multiply and disappear; places crowd in and whip away; a house that they visit collapses around them; fantasies materialize—suddenly he and she find themselves in a large double bed right on that wintry Montauk beach.

Very often films have attempted to portray dreams, and usually they fail because they are simply narratives or sets of symbols shown in soft focus and willowy images. *Eternal Sunshine* has the only dream sequence I know that convinces, if one can call the results of the doctor's process a dream. At any rate it is something like traversing a kaleidoscopic nightmare.

Here we come to Michel Gondry. He is a Frenchman who made his reputation with music videos and has directed a few feature films in the United States. He worked with Kaufman and Pierre Bismuth on the original story for the picture, and though Kaufman alone wrote the final screenplay, it is hard to believe that a writer forecast on a word processor every visual nuance and light storm in the dream sequence. The whole long passage is something like a cadenza in an early concerto—the composer prepared the way for the soloist, who then took over on his own. Gondry's virtuosity lifts the film far past science fiction into cinematic efflorescence. He shows us, more seductively than other directors have done, how freehand use of film can capture the flashes in our minds that slip between words.

At the last Joel tries to retain fragments of his Clementine memories, as the doctor and his assistants strive otherwise. In any event—after many mental events—Part Three begins back where the film began. Joel wakes up again in that opening shot, and now we know why the camera is handheld. He is trembly after having been through that dream, that cerebral hegira. But when did he dream? Before the film began? This makes us wonder whether the whole film, including the opening "reality," is oneiric. Gondry and Kaufman do not say: they do not resolve anything. They seem to imply that the quintessence of life is non-resolution between the insides of our heads and the world around us. The film ends with Joel and Clementine dreamily reunited, walk-

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ing away from us down that wintry Montauk beach until they disappear and the screen is sheer white.

Gondry's filmic dazzle is greatly aided by Ellen Kuras's cinematography—something like the work that Sven Nykvist did for Bergman—and the superb editing by Valdís Óskarsdóttir. But Gondry, contrary to what we might expect from a cinematic virtuoso, is a knowing director of actors. Kate Winslet plays Clementine, and it is breathtaking to see the woman who was the young Murdoch in *Iris* and Marianne Dashwood in *Sense and Sensibility* giving body to this light-comedy figure. Claudette Colbert and Irene Dunne used to do it in the 1930s: Winslet, with American accent, equals them here.

Then there is Jim Carrey as Joel. Has his frame been overtaken by another spirit? The unbearable smart-ass of his first films has given way to an actor of some depth, some sorrow, some hunger for verity. Carrey sent signs of this change in *The Truman Show* and *The Majestic*. Here there is no gram of self-display: he wants only to burrow into the moment. It would be a sound performance by any actor; it is all the more laudable in a former nuisance.

Three other characters wind through the story—or around it. The doctor has three assistants, two men and a pert female blonde whose activities add variety to the proceedings. The blonde is in love with the doctor, but the tactical reason for her presence is to help anchor the film's title. It is a line from Alexander Pope's "Eloisa to Abelard": she quotes it to the doctor, and, by jiminy, he knows it too. Then they move toward sex. But the trouble with the line as title of the picture is that it has only a very tenuous relation to the story. Besides, those who happen to know the poem will also know that, far from a lover's murmur, it is spoken by a nun in praise of her chastity. ■

ROBERT BRUSTEIN ON THEATER

A King and Two Queens

ABOUT TWENTY YEARS AGO, the British director Jonathan Miller and I discussed doing a *King Lear* together. When I asked what actor he wanted for the title role, he replied: "Jack Lemmon." Noting my vacant expression, he explained that he saw the play not as a cosmic tragedy, but as a family play with comic overtones. (Miller's roots are in comedy—he began his theatrical career as one of the four wits in the satirical revue *Beyond the Fringe*.) A few years later Miller got his chance to work with Lemmon—not in Lear, mercifully, but in O'Neill's *Long Day's Journey Into Night*. Miscast as James Tyrone, Lemmon, in a production driven by Miller's pell-mell pace, sailed through this brooding drama with such an excess of nervous high spirits that the normally four-hour play lasted just over two.

KING LEAR
(Vivian Beaumont Theater)

VALHALLA
(New York Theatre Workshop)

Miller is one of the brightest people I know—indeed, he may be the most brilliant talker in the Western world—and so even his more harebrained ideas deserve respect. Still, I am relieved that his current production of **KING LEAR** at Lincoln Center, imported from Canada's Stratford Festival, is not being played as comedy, and that an experienced classical actor, Christopher Plummer, is in the leading role. While the acting is brisk, it is hardly rushed (the play lasts a full three hours and forty minutes). But neither is this *King Lear* a tragedy. No heroes or villains stalk the stage of the Vivian Beaumont, only a bestiary of domestic animals.

Peter Brook's celebrated production of *Lear* in the 1960s was also relatively restrained, but it took place in an existential void. Miller's *Lear*, on the other hand, is very much of the world, an engrossing family drama about a cranky old man who hands his property over to the kids before consulting with an estate planner or signing a revocable trust. The production has some great sound effects in the storm scene, but there's rarely any thunder in the performances. In his effort to avoid the heroics of those knighted thespians he calls the "noble wobblies" (Wolfit, Gielgud, Olivier, Redgrave, and Richardson), the director has settled for a modest, realistic style. This approach may neglect the emotional heights and depths of a monumental work, but it delivers verbal meat and intellectual substance in a crisp, clear, and compelling fashion.

Miller's productions are usually inspired by Renaissance paintings. This one, thanks to Clare Mitchell's costumes, seems to be set in the seventeenth-century world of Rembrandt and Hals. Lear's retinue, dressed in ruffs, puffed sleeves, hip boots, slouchy hats, and long wigs, have the look of Dutch masters posing for their portraits. Lear's daughters Goneril and Regan, their hair shooting stiffly from the sides of their heads like daggers, are more like characters out of a fairy tale, perhaps Cinderella's wicked stepsisters. (Claire Jullien's Cordelia, a bland, guileless blonde, could be Cinderella herself.) Returning us to Shakespeare's time, Ralph Funicello's set is a handsome approximation of an Elizabethan stage (more accurately, of the stage at the Canadian Stratford), complete with wooden stairs leading to a balcony above and a few sticks of furniture.

Just a few years shy of Lear's ripe age myself, I have had the opportunity to watch a lot of actors in this part. Louis Calhern played him like a noble wreck, Morris Carnovsky like a Yiddish patriarch with ungrateful *kinder* who never come to visit, Paul Scofield like a Prussian Junker reduced in rank to a Beckett bench-sitter, Laurence Olivier like a retired pensioner with Parkinson's, Robert Stephens like a recovering drunk, Ian Holm like a furious vagrant, and F. Murray Abraham like a homeless Bowery derelict. Of all these actors, Christopher Plummer has perhaps the best physical resources for the part, with his regal bearing, frizzy white hair, bald pate, and spiky beard. It doesn't hurt, either, that he is highly intelligent and possessed with a great sonorous voice, bursting with irony, scorn, and sarcasm. In his first scene, Plummer's Lear is already experiencing senior moments—he can't seem to remember the name of one of Cordelia's suitors. But unlike many actors who perform the part in their golden years, Plummer still has remarkable energy, though Miller prevents him from howling at the storm or scaling the impossible peaks of the heath.

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Plummer's best scenes are with the Fool, played by Barry MacGregor as a disinterested, pasty-faced busker in a trailing greatcoat, too bemused to return Lear's affection for him. Indeed, the most moving moment of the production comes when, in growing fury and frustration, Lear delivers the line "O Fool, I shall go mad" in six sharp syllables punctuated by hammered blows to the Fool's chest. (In his harrowing indictment of Goneril—"How sharper than a serpent's tooth it is / To have a thankless child"—he spits the last two words as if he were driving nails into her skull.)

But for the most part Plummer is not surrounded by a particularly strong cast. The actress playing Goneril brushes away Lear's appalling curse of eternal sterility with typical nonchalance, as if it were a piece of lint on her costume. (In the Brook production, Irene Worth's Goneril was literally crippled by Lear's malediction, and never quite recovered from it.) Indeed, both Goneril and Regan come across less like heartless tigers than like Renaissance housewives, irritated by the way Lear's retainers mess up the living room carpet with their muddy boots. And for some reason Edgar, in his disguise as Poor Tom, is naked except for a loincloth and a crown of thorns, as if he were auditioning for Mel Gibson.

What comes through Miller's production most strongly is not so much Lear's quarrel with the universe as his growing understanding of how, surrounded by courtiers, courtesies, and accommodations, he has been blind to the needs of the "poor naked wretches" that populate his kingdom. But this is not just a play about social injustice. It is about a naturalistic universe abandoned by the gods, where creatures prey upon each other like monsters from the deep. Miller's lack of interest in the tragic dimension causes him to hesitate before the play's awesome, bleak, and nihilistic depths.

This is not always true of his Lear. Plummer's majestic performance, however restrained, distinguishes a production that, though clear and engrossing, otherwise fails to achieve transcendence. And it is Plummer who provides whatever poignancy the evening possesses. Having peered into the abyss, this broken man is left with one last hope: that far from the false life of the court, he might find comfort in prison with his beloved daughter—though bounded in an eggshell, like Hamlet a king of infinite space. When she is hanged, even that consolation is denied him. But how can he—or any of us—give up a final illusion? Plummer's Lear, believing Cordelia still alive, dies with a look of beatitude on his face. Like Gloucester's upon learning of Edgar's identity, his heart bursts smilingly.

Given Happiness Like Water

Who wouldn't be the reed basket, rain-hollowed stone?
Always borne aloft in other arms
God knows we are only half-human
That truth is a spiral staircase
Why should we grieve
Windrows of tasseled corn flowing past the road
Like the wake of an ocean liner
Astronomers track the star's signal backwards to time's
Source, its cloud of dust and gas like the wake
Of an ocean liner, windrows of tasseled corn flowing
My darling why should we grieve
That truth is a spiral staircase
God knows we are only half-human
Always borne aloft in other arms
Who wouldn't be the reed basket, rain-hollowed stone?

ELLEN WEHLE

Paul Rudnick has written a play about an entirely different sort of monarch: Ludwig II, the mad king of Bavaria. His **VALHALLA**, at the enterprising New York Theatre Workshop, is his most ambitious and, I believe, his strongest work yet, carrying the gay irreverence of *Jeffrey* and *The Most Fabulous Story Ever Told* to lunatic extremes. *Valhalla* features two parallel characters from different periods of history: King Ludwig II (Peter Frechette), who ruled Bavaria until 1886, and James Avery (Sean Dugan), an amoral and larcenous scoundrel whose story takes place in Texas during the 1930s and 1940s. Their narratives alternate, collide, and finally intersect over time in a manner already familiar to us from plays and movies such as *Arcadia* and *The Hours*.

Both characters are essentially gay men with a gay aesthetic; both are momentarily distracted from their true homoerotic interests by unusual young women; and both are afflicted by dominating mothers—a hilarious Candy Buckley monitoring their posture ("Shoulders back!") and pinching their cheeks ("Is that a face?"). At the age of twelve, James conceives a passion for the virtuous, all-American Henry Lee, whom he introduces to erotic literature and mutual masturbation. And he introduces himself ("I'm a cocksucker") to the class beauty, Sally Mortimer ("I'm a Baptist"), who eventually bears James's child. Years later, when Henry is about to marry Sally, James steals her wedding dress, puts on a veil, and goes through the wedding ceremony in her place. Stealing is James's passion, and he is not above setting fire to houses ("I redecorated"). As a result, he spends a good deal of time in reform school, prison, and finally in the army during World War II, never losing his good humor except when Henry, his friend and lover, is killed by a Nazi whose life James had spared (a small plot theft from *Saving Private Ryan*).

When we first see James and Ludwig, both are in love with swans, and throughout the play both try to aestheticize life. ("God wants the world to be beautiful," Ludwig remarks. "But it isn't.") James finds Texas ugly; Ludwig can't stand ugly people. James disguises himself as a bride; Ludwig dresses as a nun. Sally Mortimer distracts James from his homoerotic disposition; the hunchback Princess Sophie does the same for Ludwig, allowing him to touch her hump and prodding Rudnick into a lot of wonderfully tasteless infirmity jokes. Like most kings, however, Ludwig has the power to make life conform to his own ideal image of it by altering the landscape, as Louis XIV did with Versailles. And, wildly passionate about Wagner ("the Tragedy of Lohengrin," he says, "is that he never got to see *Lohengrin*"), he builds a kitsch storybook castle called Valhalla that later becomes the model for the Magic Kingdom in Disney World. ("It's like nature . . . if God was gay.")

By the end of the play, Ludwig has been declared insane—an aide compares him to opera or "music that has gone mad"—and James has had a breakdown. Ludwig commits suicide; James dies of cancer. In an imaginary and quite touching scene, the two dead men brush each other across the centuries, while James's

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daughter, Annie, obtains a reliquary that Ludwig designed for his heart. It now houses James's glass swan.

The director, Christopher Ashley, achieves exactly the right balance of comedy and subtle pathos, and his cast, virtually all of whom double as Bavarians and Texans, transforms superbly. Rudnick may have a weakness for one-liners, and the scene involving a female Jewish tour guide from Long Island welcoming her constituency to Temple Beth Shalom's Whirlwind Adventure Castles of Bavaria ("Donald Trump, eat shit and die") may be a little facile. But this play is a real advance for a playwright with a fertile comic imagination and a lot of theater savvy, who knows how to transform absurdities into truisms and non sequiturs into insights. ■

JED PERL ON ART
Firings

THE ROUGH-HEWN ELEGANCE of Isamu Noguchi's work in ceramics is unlike anything else in modern art. Noguchi experimented with clay during three sojourns in Japan—in 1931, 1950, and 1952—and he approached this ancient medium with the breezy, smiling sophistication of a man who knew how to make much but not too much of his East-meets-West background. He was born in Los Angeles in 1904; his mother was American and his father was Japanese. Although Noguchi spent only part of his childhood in Japan and hardly knew his father, a poet who wrote about the visual arts, Japanese culture was his birthright, and you feel that complex, intimate relationship in the witty figures and looming totems and striking vases and plates that Noguchi made during one particularly intense period of activity in 1952. The frequently unglazed clay gives even Noguchi's most imposing forms an improvisational informality. His relationship with the earth of Japan suggests the confident impetuosity of a mature love affair, and the work that he produced in a bucolic spot called Kita Kamakura is by turns ardent, funny, poignant, lush, and austere.

ISAMU NOGUCHI AND MODERN JAPANESE CERAMICS
(Japanese American National Museum)

"Isamu Noguchi and Modern Japanese Ceramics," the extraordinary exhibition that is at the Japanese American National Museum in Los Angeles until May 30, gives Noguchi's accomplishment a geographical and historical context. I was glad to see his ceramics juxtaposed with work by Kitaōji Rosanjin, the older artist who was his host at Kita Kamakura and emboldened Noguchi with his own work, which taps into a vein of expressionist playfulness and rapture in Japanese art. This show includes an interesting group of younger potters, among them Yamada Hikaru and Yagi Kazuo, whose infatuation with what they saw as contemporary art's graphic whimsy and architectonic brutalism does not always avoid crossing the line into kitsch. But even the finest ceramics by Hikaru, Kazuo, and the formidable Rosanjin only underscore Noguchi's high-flying achievement, for he embraces the crafts traditions with the freedom of a man who is unafraid of art's loftiest ambitions.

Noguchi's approach to ceramics is dazzlingly self-confident but not at all snobbish. It is exhilarating to be in the presence of an artist who has such a direct feeling for the making of things, whether an eleven-inch plate or a fourteen-foot-high sculpture called *Even the Centipede*, which consists of many discrete ceramic forms, each a curious confabulation of the animal and vegetable and mineral, attached by pieces of string to a very long pole. Leaving this remarkable show—which was organized by the Arthur M. Sackler Gallery in Washington and has also been seen at Japan Society in New York—I found myself thinking about the catalytic role that clay played at this point in Noguchi's career.

There is a temptation to believe that ceramics, because they are essentially utilitarian objects, have relatively little to teach us about the nature of aesthetic experience. The opposite is true, for a beautiful utilitarian object poses ultimate questions about the place of beauty in the world. The Chinese have grappled with such questions for a thousand years, and the Japanese continued those inquiries through the rituals of the tea ceremony. There have been some extraordinary ancient tea bowls in a number of important recent shows—in the Hon'ami Kōetsu retrospective in Philadelphia in 2000; in "Kazari: Decoration and Display in Japan," at Japan Society in 2002; and in "Turning Point: Oribe and the Arts of Sixteenth-Century Japan," at the Metropolitan Museum of Art earlier this season. The master of the tea ceremony gives these bowls such a specialized and exalted importance that the effect is to decontextualize a simple object and force us to confront its essence. Especially when the bowl has been designed in a self-consciously rustic style, its ordinariness can almost embarrass us with its complexities. The strictly prescribed function of the tea bowl turns it into an abstraction of a utilitarian object that is utilitarian nonetheless. Thus the simplest of objects can suggest a taxonomy of aesthetic need.

Potters have been arguing for so long for the freestanding value of their work that they now turn out to have been in the vanguard of a more general effort to reaffirm the value of the aesthetic in the face of a culture in which functionalism rules. The perennially second-class status of the crafts traditions, at least in the West, is an unexpected source of strength, for ceramists have learned to live without the privileged cultural position that painters and sculptors have so recently lost. Ceramists have been fighting for legitimacy for so long that they may be tempted to give a knowing wink to painters who now bemoan their delegitimation.

I realize that when it comes to displays of empty virtuosity, craftspeople can be the worst offenders; the crafts magazines are lousy with feats of technical wizardry that merely play catch-up with the junk that was presented in last year's art magazines. But that is hardly the whole story. The best ceramists, who like all artists are most truly philosophical when they are in the midst of their work, know that beauty is grounded in the exigencies of materials—they believe in a kind of natural authority. And you do not have to be a purist to celebrate the fundamentals of shape and color and texture. Ken Price, in his crazily colored ceramic

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sculptures of recent years, is simultaneously a hipster eccentric and an artisanal fundamentalist. Indeed, there are dangers in taking an overly pious attitude toward the fundamentals of ceramics, especially when the fundamentals take on an element of evangelism, as they do in the life of the English potter Bernard Leach, who is the subject of a fine new biography.

"CERAMISTS ARE A STRANGE lot," John Ashbery observed a quarter of a century ago, reviewing an exhibition of American ceramics. Commenting on how resentful they could be about their shaky standing in the art world, he wryly observed that "Nietzsche said that it is not the business of the gods to make clay pots, but few potters would agree with him." Ashbery implied that ceramists had a point, and it is difficult not to feel that pottery can have a divine spark after you have taken a look at something like the late sixteenth-century tea bowl in red raku included in the Metropolitan's "Turning Point" show, a bowl that is known as *Twilight* on account of the delicately shimmering radiance of its surface. Something in the chemical effect of the glaze, in the blurring of gray and orange and gold, analogizes meteorological effects in much the same way as Turner's bursts of watercolor on ultra-absorbent paper, only the effect is far more abstract. This tea bowl is not about twilight, it *is* twilight.

Potters regard the firing of their work with a mixture of anxiety and awe, which is no surprise when you see what heat can do for minerals on the glaze of a bowl such as *Twilight*. There comes a time in any working process when the artist is not entirely in control, but for the ceramist whose pots are in the kiln this is literally true. There is no phase in the work of a painter or a sculptor or a printmaker or a weaver that can match the moment of truth when the potter goes into the cooling kiln to see what has transpired. Accounts of the lives of potters are full of tales of calamities in the kiln. When wood-fired kilns were the only ones available, just keeping proper temperatures could be harrowing; catastrophes were frequent, but sometimes the very unpredictability of the process yielded extraordinary, unexpected results. For the ceramist, the fire in the kiln is nothing less than divine intervention.

Bernard Leach, who was a virtual ambassador-at-large for the art of ceramics through much of the twentieth century, had his moment of truth in Japan in 1911, during a firing of raku. Born in Hong Kong and trained as an artist at the Slade School of Art, Leach had left England for the East in hopes of finding a place for himself in the arts, and his path was still unclear when he was invited to a traditional event, a party at which people decorated ceramics and then ate and drank while they were fired. In his diary Leach described the darkening evening: "Most of us sat in the tea room, beautiful, and watched a few standing round the growling kiln from which cascades of sparks emitted with curious wiggling movements." When the cups were finally removed, "the colors had altered and in one or two cases almost vanished," and Leach was in the presence of "the direct and primitive treatment of clay." The whole evening seemed "a miracle, I was carried into a new world, something dormant awoke." For Leach, that raku party was the beginning of the act of creation.

Emmanuel Cooper's book *Bernard Leach: Life and Work* (Yale University Press) takes you deep into the world of early and mid-twentieth-century ceramics, where a reconsideration of artisanal traditions took on the character of an international cause. Leach, always a distinguished-looking man, clearly relished the public role. He presided over the comings and goings of generations of students and disciples at St. Ives, the art community on the Cornish coast, and worked hard to see that the Japanese potters whom he admired were known in Europe, and that his Western friends were known in Japan. He traveled far and wide, sometimes with Hamada Shōji and Yonagi Sōetsu. They appeared as guest artists and lecturers wherever potters gathered, including two weeks at Black Mountain College in 1952. On a trip to Santa Fe, they went out to San Ildefonso, where "they wandered around looking for the renowned potter Maria Martinez, whom they found raking pots out of an ash heap. Black and shining from being fired with horse dung, the pots gleamed and sparkled and ... all three nodded their approval."

There is a charm to Leach's early years, especially when he is living in the East and his artistic and erotic curiosity suggest a man who is taking his own measure. Later on, however, he strikes one as a puritanical sensualist whose conflicts have been all too tidily resolved. Cooper, himself a potter, has written an impressive book, detailed without being absurdly so, and welcomingly dry about the man's steel-plated ego, which Leach camouflaged with his devotion to what he modestly called, in the title of his one of many books, *A Potter's Work*. While Leach did some beautiful pieces, his achievement is rather middle-of-the-road. You have to admire his efforts to honor the work that journeymen potters had done in pre-industrial times, but finally Leach's artistic program has an element of dutiful revivalism. His work is strongest, I think, when it is simplest—when the swelling form of a vase or a pitcher is left relatively unadorned. He

COURTESY ARTHUR M. SACKLER GALLERY, SMITHSONIAN INSTITUTION

Isamu Noguchi in his Kita Kamakura studio, 1952

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is not an inspired draftsman, and there is a fussiness to the applied designs, whether incised or painted, that evoke Eastern calligraphy and English and Continental decorative styles. Leach's friend Hamada has a far surer feeling for decorative scale, acknowledging the freedom of abstract art in the swing of his brush. Leach, even in the clean-lined geometric patterns of his most forward-looking designs, remains trapped in an 1890s preciosity.

READING ABOUT THE POTTER'S art can be overwhelming for anybody but the most ardent practitioners and collectors. You are immediately plunged into controversies between artists who create unique studio pieces and those who advocate a more standardized form of artisanal production, and this is just one battle in what amounts to an ongoing war between various kinds of traditionalists and innovators. After a while you may find yourself wondering where the philosophical disputes end and the gossip begins. Leach disliked Rosanjin, or so I infer from Cooper's biography, and I can see why he would have had little patience for the almost belligerent informality of the ceramics produced by Noguchi's friend. I also cannot help but wonder if Leach saw a rival in Rosanjin, who was another larger-than-life figure—much married, brilliantly entrepreneurial, as celebrated as a restaurateur as he was as a potter and a calligrapher. They both sound like the kind of men who suck the oxygen out of a room. Although Leach obviously admired pottery that was suave and punctilious in ways that Rosanjin disliked, Hamada did work that recalls some of Rosanjin's work, and both Rosanjin and Hamada took a great interest in folk art, to which Hamada, as one of the founders of the movement known as Mingei, had wanted to give new attention.

If there was a fundamental disagreement among ceramists in the twentieth century, it was about the nature of artistic discipline. Do you sustain a tradition by staying within certain predetermined parameters, as Leach did, or by riffing on it, as Rosanjin and Noguchi did? Leach was sometimes guilty of a small-minded territoriality. He was dismissive of Picasso's ceramics. I can see why he would have wanted to steer students away from a let's-have-fun attitude that might leave lesser talents looking merely puerile, but Leach probably also harbored the resentment of the hard-working insider for the outsider who easily appropriates a tradition.

One gathers that Picasso's work set off shock waves in the ceramics world. Kawai Kanjirō, another supporter of Mingei, was seen by some as a turncoat when he took an interest in Picasso's pitchers and platters. While Picasso's feeling for glazes looks hit-or-miss compared with the refinements of Leach and his friends, Leach's defense of the artisanal traditions can become overly defensive. Leach was working at a time when there was a great deal of talk about rediscovering the unity of the arts, and in comparison with the broadness of conception that the Wiener Werkstätte and the Bauhaus brought to the study of ceramics, his aspirations are a tad provincial.

FOR LEACH, POTTERY IS A CAUSE, and a community must exist to support it. Although nowadays many potters work alone, historically ceramics were a group effort, and even today the importance that ceramists ascribe to working with clay from a certain place or with firing pots in a certain kind of kiln can give pottery centers the quality of pilgrimage sites, where men and women gather, almost ritualistically, to engage in a primal game involving clay and fire and glazes and more fire. Noguchi, although he might be said to have been a tourist in the potters' world, was absolutely alive to this sense of ritual—to ceramics as serious play. Working at Kita Kamakura, aided by ceramists with infinitely more skill, he was *homo ludens*, the master of the games.

Noguchi always had a particular feeling for collaboration. His work in the theater, for Martha Graham and Balanchine and others, is a landmark in the dramatic arts, and if there is any question about the importance that he attached to these collaborations, you have only to consider the attention that he gave to his work in the theater and to his designs for gardens and playgrounds and furnishings in his autobiography, *A Sculptor's World*. (A new edition is due this summer from Steidl.) Just now there is an upswing of interest in Noguchi, who died in 1988. The Noguchi Museum in Long Island City, which has been undergoing renovations, is slated to reopen in June. The Vitra Design Museum in Germany, which has been putting some of Noguchi's designs for furniture and tableware into production, has mounted a large touring show called "Isamu Noguchi—Sculptural Design," orchestrated by the theatrical director Robert Wilson. The exhibition, which is coming to the Noguchi Museum, emphasizes the range of his interests. In an art world where multimedia is the preferred medium, Noguchi can seem prophetic.

As for his instinctive response to a wide variety of materials, it is almost shamanistic. The Akari lamps, those concoctions of paper and bamboo that have not been out of style since they went into production half a century ago, suggest a visitation of Platonic forms. The challenge of unconventional materials or the discovery of an unexpected use for a conventional material brings out the best in Noguchi. Last fall, the Pace Gallery offered a selection of bronze versions of sculptures originally made of interlocking forms cut from sheets of slate and marble, and although the bronzes had been done under Noguchi's supervision, they had none of the lithe power of the stone originals. This series of works was provoked by Noguchi's interest in the sheets of marble that were readily available and relatively inexpensive in New York in the 1940s, and the joyous ingenuity of those puzzle-like structures was lost in the transcription to bronze.

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Noguchi's ceramics are not the most familiar aspects of his work today, but they were exhibited in Tokyo and New York immediately after he did them, and "Noguchi and Modern Japanese Ceramics" convinces me that they are among his finest achievements. In the splendid catalogue, Bert Winther-Tamaki argues that Noguchi's friendship in the 1930s with Arshile Gorky, who was preoccupied with his Armenian beginnings, may have prepared Noguchi for his own encounters with Japan. For Noguchi, the conflict between tradition and assimilation was exacerbated by Japanese nationalism and the war; he was a voluntary intern at a relocation camp for Japanese-Americans in Poston, Arizona in 1942, but was back in his studio in Greenwich Village later the same year. When he traveled to Japan in the early 1950s, New York artists were taking an interest in Zen, and there was a gathering American fascination with Japanese architecture, painting, calligraphy, and decorative arts.

Japan may have been in Noguchi's blood, but it was probably from Brancusi, with whom Noguchi apprenticed in Paris in the 1920s, that he first learned that the sophisticated Western artist must be nourished by non-Western sources—and can lean and lean hard on his particular connection to those traditions, as Brancusi remained in some sense always a Romanian artist. Noguchi eventually found in the ancient funerary figures of Japan, called haniwa, a form that haunted him in much the way that the Cycladic figures had haunted the Paris of the 1920s. In the 1940s Noguchi knew both Picasso's and Miró's ceramics, and he may have felt a particular affinity with Miró's way of inscribing personages on sheets of clay; there is no question that when Noguchi makes slightly comical figures, such as his tender salute to the poet Buson, he recalls Picasso's amusingly off-the-cuff ceramic nymphs and fauns. I also suspect that Elie Nadelman's later work, especially the doll-like figures based on Greek and Roman terra-cottas that were shown in New York in the 1940s, encouraged Noguchi to think of the artist as an archaeologist who exhumes an ancient world and gives it a new kind of mysterious amplitude.

It is hard to pick and choose among these wonderful pieces. Some of them are little more than *jeux d'esprit*, chunks of clay with a few incised or raised marks that suggest a face, or longer lengths of clay evoking sheaves of wheat or a jack-in-the-pulpit. When the ceramics were exhibited in Japan in 1952, Noguchi presented panels hung with tiny shards of clay—fantastic bits of sculpture that suggested elements in a spectral anatomy. *Apartment*, a tall structure occupied by a few enigmatic figures, is a beguiling variation on the themes first sounded in Giacometti's *Palace at 4 AM*. Everything Noguchi knows—about ancient haniwa figures, about Brancusi, Giacometti, Zen, and pottery—is at his fingertips, and he moves easily among all these influences. Some of the objects that are called vases are so elaborate—with legs and table-like surfaces and multiple receptacles—that they seem more like sculptures than some of the sculptures, which are a matter of a few twists of clay. The existentialist philosophy that was popular among artists at mid-century had an optimistic side, and Noguchi picked up on a new sense that the artist was discovering his own nature as he chose freely among the possibilities offered by several traditions. When Sartre said that Giacometti was pushing art back to the beginning of creation, he could have been speaking of Noguchi's experience at the old farmhouse that Rosanjin loaned him at Kita Kamakura. Noguchi takes Rosanjin's experimental spirit and flips it high into the air, so that traditions become possibilities.

NOGUCHI WAS UNLOCKING possibilities at Kita Kamakura, and if you leave "Noguchi and Modern Japanese Ceramics" feeling that those possibilities did not outlive his brief tenure in Japan, it is one of the paradoxes of ceramics that, for all the communal feeling that this art inspires, the biggest achievements always remain isolated. The great tea bowls, no matter how firmly they are lodged in a traditional context, sometimes have a stand-alone eccentricity that confounds that tradition. This peculiar situation must appeal to Ken Price, the ceramist who turns seventy next year. He has become such a master of confounding objects that his recent work hovers, slightly ghostlike, beyond the vexing questions of genre and category.

The ceramic sculptures that Price exhibited at the Site Santa Fe Biennial and the Franklin Parrasch Gallery in 2001, and last fall at Matthew Marks, are baffle-ments, with their liquidly curving forms painted in particularly virulent acrylic colors that suggest a Surrealist reptilian glow. Forty years ago, when Price was near the beginning of his career, the critic John Coplans was reminded of Brancusi, Arp, and Miró, and described "a strange interplay between the joyful and the ominous." Coplans's words are still an apt description of Price's work, although there is a let-loose craziness to the new shapes, a gleeful daring in the suggestion of the phallic and the vaginal. While there is something of the glibly pneumatic quality of cartoon characters about Price's melting amoebas, he regards these curves not as static patterns but as fluid profiles that compose and recompose as we move around the curvaceous forms.

Constructing objects that are two or three feet high, Price sometimes suggests the serrated shapes of Chinese scholars' rocks or the slipping-away-from-you creepy streamlining of snakes and sea creatures. And he rejects the traditional ceramic color, which emerges from the firing in the kiln, in favor of a crazy dazzle of acrylic, layered onto the surface and repeatedly sanded down to achieve an intoxicating shimmer that suggests customized hot-rod finishes or a riff on the Art Nouveau glamour of Gallé or Tiffany glass.

PRICE IS DOING THE BEST WORK of his career. There have been times when he was not immune to a syndrome common among ceramic artists, a need to work off their ambivalence about the crafts traditions by satirizing them. Price's *Happy's Curios*, which appeared as an installation at the Los Angeles County Museum of Art in 1978, featured display cases filled with Price's elaborate renderings of inexpensive Mexican ceramics. While there is no doubt that this was a loving sort of satire, his variations on south-of-the-border styles lacked the unself-conscious assurance of the Mexican originals. Price was left in the same uncomfortable situation as the Pattern and Decoration artists of the 1970s, who in drawing gallerygoers' attention to the informal beauty of contemporary Middle Eastern or Asian decorative styles only demonstrated how very difficult it was to rival the modest but unquestionable visual power of the originals. There is something too sweetly ingratiating about Price's work in *Happy's Curios*; his salute to Mexico's hardworking craftsmen can feel condescending.

At the time, Price was quoted as saying that he meant to "elevate but not

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sanctify." The remark is worth considering when you have seen his recent work, because this is exactly what he is doing now. These enigmatic objects are kitsch that has been pulverized and metamorphosized; kitsch that has been absorbed through the artist's nervous system. Although Price's swelling shapes may bring Arp's marble statues to mind, there is something cryptic about Price's relationship to that modern master, because Price has no interest in form as classical expression. He remains a ceramic artist even as he rejects practicality and utility. In spite of all the things that his works evoke, you are left feeling that he is essentially ambivalent about art's metaphorical possibilities. His ceramics are things, not sculptures. Price insists on the value of craft for its own sake, until it becomes a kind of peculiar relative of art-for-art's-sake. There is a sneaky elitism about Price's work. He uses his west-of-the-Mississippi Joe Craftsman persona to dispel whatever unease the sleek formalism of his work provokes.

Price mocks all the neat old distinctions between the art traditions and the craft traditions. He does so not as an ideologue, but with a craftsman's stubborn cunning. There is a preternatural calm to the work that Price is doing now. Like some of the jazz masters, he has arrived at the point where he is so cool that he is beyond cool, with an elegant weirdness that we might call classical except that it relates to nothing other than itself. While some may see the growing attention to Price's work as symptomatic of our anything-goes art world, the recessive power of his work has nothing to do with other ceramists who are gaining attention, such as Grayson Perry, the Englishman who won the Turner Prize last year for rather conventionally shaped pots decorated with figurative scenes that mix social comment and sexual confrontation for effects that suggest an Art Spiegelman wanna-be.

You can argue that Price is hardly a potter any longer, but what saves his work from affectation is some essential belief in the utilitarian simplicity of the act of creation. Of course, he disguises this simplicity in a hipster's funky shell. Finally he takes his stand with the potter who resolves all the questions of meaning and metaphor before the work is ever begun, thereby leaving himself free to pursue a formalism that, because it is focused on mere pottery, will never be arid. This is the attitude that you will find in any first-rate ceramist working today, and I certainly feel it in the work of Alice Federico, which has been shown at the Amos Eno Gallery in recent years. Working in Montana with Japanese-style wood-fired kilns, Federico has produced variations on amphora shapes, some built of several thrown pieces to produce tall vases that bring to mind the figures of haniwa ceramics—and sometimes Noguchi's work in Japan. Federico's darkened, abraded surfaces, produced by the effects of sodium carbonate or wood ash, have an old-fashioned natural authority, which she sets in a tension with forms that have a modern vigor and even aggressiveness. These pots bring to mind Hamada's observation that for the ceramist "real feeling seems to hover impartially; it is something inherent in the nature of a work."

Hamada's voice comes through vividly in a book that Leach published in the 1970s, which takes the form of a dialogue between the two men, ranging through philosophic speculations and autobiographical reminiscences and including some absolutely practical advice about clay and glazes and the best type of wood to stoke a kiln. The book has a stirring pragmatism; we see how a ceramist's speculative forays grow out of his hard work. "With one's intellect," Hamada announces, "with one's mind, one can understand what tradition means. But in work, what comes out must come out through one's own fingertips, one's own hands, otherwise it is no work at all." There is something in the ancientness and the plainness of ceramics that mixes together the practical and the metaphysical to a very extreme degree. No other art is simultaneously so literal and so metaphorical. Every ceramist who makes *a* vessel, a literal thing, is also making *the* vessel, a metaphorical thing.

The conundrum of Noguchi's and Price's ceramics is that the literal possibilities and the metaphorical possibilities seem to compete endlessly with each other, becoming unlikely friends. This may be the oldest artistic competition on earth, considering that pots are among the first things that men made. You can see the competition evolving in those ancient Japanese tea bowls, which for centuries have dared anybody to call them trivial. Right now, when every artist is expected to justify the act of creation, we could use a good strong dose of the ceramist's quietly militant aestheticism. ■

James Wood

The Little Drummer Boy

ABSOLUTE FRIENDS
By John Le Carré
(Little, Brown, 455 pp., $26.95)

I.

RATHER AS VIRGIL PROMISED that you could learn how to farm from reading the *Georgics*, so it must have seemed, at least at first, that you could learn how to spy from reading John Le Carré's early novels. One of the reasons that these well-written thrillers were so enthusiastically mistaken for literary novels was that, like their richer cousins, they opened a new world. Surely this was what good fiction was supposed to do—to make it new? George Smiley (a.k.a. "Control"), Alec Leamas, Peter Guillam, the "Circus" (the headquarters of the British intelligence services), Karla (Smiley's Soviet opponent and nemesis), "Moscow Central": readers fell eagerly on this glum but jazzy exotica, glum because it was intended as the prosaic gray to Ian Fleming's glamorous stripes, but exotic nonetheless because it was still about secret agents. Paradoxically, of course, such detail functioned as fiction but performed as fact: many readers probably concluded that they were encountering the non-fictional truth about contemporary espionage, a sensation nourished by their knowledge of Le Carré's background as a spy and a diplomat in Berlin. Yet much of Le Carré's detail was entirely invented, including the terminology, and there were old intelligence hands who complained that his picture of the service, while intended as an anti–James Bond demystification, was itself a species of romance.

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Instead of Bond's easy triumphs, Le Carré presented liberal English muddle, the kind of mutely triumphant failure canonically formulated by George Eliot at the end of *Middlemarch*, in the famous summation: "But the effect of her being on those around her was incalculably diffusive: for the growing good of the world is partly dependent on unhistoric acts; and that things are not so ill with you and me as they might have been, is half owing to the number who lived faithfully a hidden life, and rest in unvisited tombs." The English spies whom Le Carré wrote about were not exactly committing unhistoric acts; but theirs were hidden lives, lost in the complicated fog of the Cold War. Le Carré's characters were almost willfully unglamorous, closer to Oxford dons or mild headmasters than to political brokers. And no one would ever hear about their sacrifices and their courage, partly because they were naturally secret, and partly because their actual jobs were morally shabbier than the public wanted to know.

The classic Le Carré plot is a masterful exercise in bitter ideological arrest. In *The Spy Who Came In From the Cold*, a British spy, Alec Leamas, is ordered to penetrate the East German intelligence system by posing as a defector. His job is to bring down Mundt, a hated and murderous Communist espionage chief. But Leamas has been set up by his own people: too late—once he is beyond the Iron Curtain—he realizes that Mundt is a double agent working for the British, and that Leamas's real, but unwitting, task has been to bring down Mundt's ambitious deputy, who was about to expose his chief. Leamas has been left out in the cold; a good man has been sacrificed for the larger "good" of the needs of the intelligence system. The ends justify the means—or do they?

Le Carré has worked several variations on this two-pincer motif. His new novel, while pretending to literary depth, essentially reprises the nullification plot of the earlier thrillers: a British spy, working as a double agent in East Germany, has been friends for years with his Communist counterpart, who in turn has been working for the British. The British spy is asked to perform one last task: to penetrate a shadowy organization, apparently based in Germany, that may be receiving money from Islamic terrorists. Like Leamas, the British spy is set up, left out in the cold by forces willing to sacrifice him to their ideological ends.

Le Carré's radicalism has often been thought to lie in his political complexity. His books are poised, seemingly, on a razor's edge of paradox: his British agents must hold in careful balance their ends and their means; they have loyalty to the human individual but also to large institutions; they are without great ideological fervor, but insofar as they daily oppose the ideological fervor of their Communist counterparts, they necessarily take on some of their enemy's zeal. In *Smiley's People*, George Smiley, the former head of British intelligence, finally brings down his old foe Karla, the head of Soviet intelligence. But, in a proper twist, he does this only by using Karla's dirty methods: "on Karla has descended the curse of Smiley's compassion; on Smiley the curse of Karla's fanaticism."

But this is not as difficult as it seems, and too often what appears to be paradox is closer to ideological nullification. Le Carré has often been praised for the delicacy with which he portrays the "moral grayness" of the Cold War struggle, not least because his plots have a way of suggesting that the two sides were more alike than either wanted to believe. In fact, instead of analyzing the political complexities of the Cold War, Le Carré's books narrate the functional complexities of the political complexities; that is, they show us, mainly, that the two espionage systems often worked in matching ways. This insight then locks the mazy plots in place, essentially closing the door on further analysis: the two-sided mirror dazzles further curiosity. And so the form of the books tends toward a self-canceling amnesty, each side a little shabbier at the end of the story than it was at the start.

The functional complexity of Le Carré's fictional contraptions actually licenses a flight from political complexity, since the emphasis on means rather than ends—the two sides share the former, but obviously not the latter—allows distinctions in moral and ideological beliefs to slip away. Finally Le Carré has nothing more to report about these great struggles than their ironies. And besides, the English spies are naturally unideological. Ideology is itself a suspicious enthusiasm. There are knotted ironies in Le Carré's work, but they tend to balance each other, to hold each other in arrest. They are nothing like the self-corroding ironies of Conrad's *The Secret Agent*, a novel that seems to mock both radicalism and conservatism, and then seems to mock its own serpentine pessimisms.

One other reason, then, for the haste with which serious critics have garlanded Le Carré as not just a very good genre writer but also as a genuinely literary novelist may be that his books seem to reproduce on the political level what the great novelists are prized for doing on the human level. The complexity, the ambiguity, the command of moral grayness, the willingness to raise questions rather than answer them—these, at the level of character, are what the liberal humanist novel is supposed to do, and Eliot's peroration at the end of *Middlemarch* merely wraps a final unfinality around these traditional concerns. Le Carré's thrillers seem so respectable in literary terms, I think, because these concerns are lightly lifted from the shoulders of characters and transferred to the shoulders of actors—agents, spies, functionaries, bureaucrats.

Well, this complexity is not as complex as it seems. But, more than that, the available complexity is further betrayed by the simplicity and the neatness of Le Carré's prose, and by the fact that Le Carré's characters are not characters. They are, precisely, agents—agents of his plots. The prose has a knowing efficiency, which closes off discussion. Le Carré is fond of using what Roland Barthes liked to call the "reference code," that staple of nineteenth-century narration in which an omniscient author makes easy reference to consensual assumptions ("It is a truth universally acknowledged," and so on). In Le Carré's case—as in the case of his great influence, Graham Greene—the reference code is used in debased form, as an adjunct of the kind of knowingness his spies are assumed to possess: "The passport officer was a youngish, little man with an Intelligence Corps tie and some mysterious badge in his lapel. He had a ginger moustache, and a North Country accent which was his life's enemy." The passport officer, glimpsed at London airport as Leamas heads for Berlin, is not seen again. This knowledge about him poses, then, as Leamas's swift, commanding take on the young man (Leamas would notice the Intelligence Corps tie); but in fact the detail about his North Country accent is pure authorial omniscience, of the kind that prompts the restive reader to ask: How do you know this? On what authority do you

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decide that the man's accent was his "life's enemy"?

In *Absolute Friends*, a similar moment occurs when the British agent, Ted Mundy, is trying to place the accent of a glamorous aide: "Vassar with a German accent, he decides." A minute later, he is at it again, with another character's voice: "in Mundy's imagination it is sired in the Levant, trained in the Balkans and finished off in the Bronx." Alas, the absurdity of Ted Mundy's pretense to omniscience—this is surely a trope taken directly from the movies—signals the large gap between Le Carré's latest book and the relative novelty of his earliest ones.

Le Carré can write very well. In the passage that precedes Leamas's encounter with the passport officer, he writes that "the airport reminded Leamas of the war: machines, half hidden in the fog, waiting patiently for their masters; the resonant voices and their echoes, the sudden shout and the incongruous clip of a girl's heels on a stone floor; the roar of an engine that might have been at your elbow." This is suggestive, and almost lyrically skewed. More usually, the prose does what it has to do, though often with a nicely chosen word:

> Smiley arrived in Hamburg in mid-morning and took the airport bus to the city centre. Fog lingered and the day was very cold. In the Station Square, after repeated rejections, he found an old, thin terminus hotel with a lift licensed for three persons at a time. He signed in as Standfast, then walked as far as a car-rental agency, where he hired a small Opel, which he parked in an underground garage that played softened Beethoven out of loudspeakers.

A glance at the bald-faced illiteracies of a contemporary thriller writer such as David Baldacci suffices to explain why Le Carré is softly treated by literary readers. The "thin" terminus hotel and "softened" Beethoven are delicately done, and the whole passage is elegantly finished; it is the discourse of an educated man rather than the words-by-the-yard offered by contemporary sellers. But it is, all the same, genre-writing. The prose always observes its own conventions rather than revealing anything new, deep, or truthful. The details are merely the quorum necessary to keep the narrative process going; the specificity is essentially bogus (the lift licensed "for three persons," the "small Opel," the garage playing Beethoven)—not because it is false but because, in its very banality, it gestures not toward the unpredictable world but toward the conventions of a certain kind of efficient realism. The prose announces, in effect: "here is what the world generally looks like according to the conventions of realism." It is a civilized style, but nonetheless a slickness unto death.

Hamburg can perhaps get by with a few dabs of detail, but characters cannot. One of the strangest myths about Le Carré is that he is a "superior" genre-writer because he creates "rich characters." One critic has gone so far as to allege that George Smiley is "one of the great creations of modern literature." *The New York Times* said of *The Little Drummer Girl* that "it becomes instantly apparent that we are in the hands of a writer of great powers." But again, Le Carré's character portraits are not themselves complex, merely complex relative to the rolled thinness of most characters in contemporary thrillers. And one way Le Carré appears to make his characters complex is by ensuring that they do not think:

> Leamas was not a reflective man and not a particularly philosophical one. He knew he was written off—it was a fact of life which he would henceforth live with, as a man must live with cancer or imprisonment. He knew there was no kind of preparation which could have bridged the gap between then and now. He met failure as one day he would probably meet death, with cynical resentment and the courage of a solitary. He'd lasted longer than most; now he was beaten.

This is the tone, and the philosophical posture, inherited from Greene and, further back, from Hemingway, in which what masquerades as thought is actually just the ratification of permissible male reticence. Versions of this male reticence can be found in the work of Robert Stone, and in some of Andre Dubus's stories; it is almost a universal male vernacular. Such characters—"Leamas was not a reflective man"—are, paradoxically, alert but always blocking the ratiocinative consequences of their alertness. Such characters are not minds but just voyeurs of their own obscurities. One thinks of the end of *A Farewell to Arms*: "He looked very dead. It was raining. I had liked him as well as anyone I ever knew." And that is all we hear on the subject. In such writing, a principled refusal to be sentimental stifles feeling and the description of feeling; and that refusal, in turn, becomes itself somewhat sentimental.

Le Carré's characters, one feels, are mysteries wrapped in enigmas, and therefore not finally interesting as riddles. The enigmatic hangs over their reticence like the brim of a disguising homburg, and this quality is the human counterpart to what they do as spies. One is reminded of Arnold Bennet's contention, with which Virginia Woolf had such play, that Sherlock Holmes was a real and rounded literary character. Woolf was right to point out that, in any deep sense, Holmes is just a "sack filled with straw." He functions perfectly, vividly indeed, within the modest requirements of his genre, which is why his characteristics barely change. Le Carré has said that George Smiley changes over the course of the several books in which he appears, but in truth his character remains exactly the same, and is limited to two or three essential elements: he is calm, he is donnish, he is gently crafty. The essential scandal of George Smiley never alters: it is that he approaches international espionage with the modest, pedantic decency of the Oxford common room. The disjunction between him and his world is what is shocking; he himself is relatively unimportant. The adverbs that unvaryingly accompany his speech in *Smiley's People* betray his one-dimensionality: "Smiley suggested helpfully ... said Smiley with great gentleness ... Smiley said from far inside his thoughts ... said Smiley deprecatingly ... Smiley had the wisdom to keep silence ... replied equably ... objected mildly ... Smiley put in gently ... Smiley waited ... Smiley offered no comment ... Smiley offered no answer ... Smiley seemed curiously unconcerned ... Smiley said, with an apologetic smile."

Yes, we think, as we encounter him, Smiley was indeed destined to be incarnated by the shyly smiling Alec Guinness, but this does not mean that he is a complicated literary creation. He is, rather, a fine example of the primitive novelistic character who most benefits from the actor's transfiguring embodiment.

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II.

CHARACTER, AND THE LACK OF depth, are important elements in the failure of Le Carré's latest book. Superficially, the novel is very different from the kind of work that founded the writer's reputation. It is an ample, indeed garrulous 455 pages, and ranges across thirty years in the lives of the friends who give the book its title. One of them is Ted Mundy, a well-born, boarding school–educated Oxford dropout, who turns up in Berlin in 1969 to join a student commune. He gets involved in political resistance; though, in proper English (and Le Carré) fashion, he has no very fierce ideology. He is simply one of those people on whom life imposes its fateful patterns, a mirror rather than a lamp. One of the reasons for his political involvement is his new friendship with Sasha, a brilliant and voluble German agitator, a Cohn-Bendit type, flushed with ideology and newfound sexual power. Mundy saves Sasha's skin during a march, and gets nastily beaten by the German police in the process. He earns Sasha's deepest loyalty.

Mundy returns to England, though not before attracting the attention of Nicholas Amory, a British diplomat-spy in Berlin. It is the late 1970s. In London, Mundy marries, and starts working for the British Council, an organization whose job is to promote British culture overseas. During a trip to East Germany, in which Mundy is accompanying a young troupe of Shakespeare actors, he is surreptitiously approached by his old friend Sasha, who has a story to tell. Sasha has gone over to the East Germans, but has quickly soured on their ideological promises, and has turned traitor: he is working as a double agent, leaking valuable East German secrets to the West. And he wants to recruit Mundy as a double agent: Mundy will appear to be working for the East Germans while actually taking information from Sasha and handing it back to London. It has all been approved by Nick Amory, Sasha's contact in West Berlin. As Le Carré writes: "A classic Cold War double agent operation is taking its first cautious steps towards consummation." So classic, indeed, that Le Carré has written and rewritten the same story, the same consummation, several times.

But Le Carré wants his novel to be a deep portrait of Mundy, which means that there is much dawdling retrospect. Generally, whenever Le Carré is dealing with elements of Cold War espionage the writing tautens, takes on informational muscle, and proceeds happily. But the parts of the book closest to conventional literary narration are reliably the weakest. Part of this has to do with a fateful decision to narrate the book in the present tense, always a risky choice, since it is natural to think of narrated stories as having already happened rather than as entities being created in front of the reader on the page. Le Carré compounds this awkwardness with a peculiar jaunty comedy, something approaching the mock-heroic. It is an attempt, one suspects, to tell the story in Mundy's voice, but still it seems freakish:

> Flat years, frustrating years, years of directionless wandering are about to blight the progress of Ted Mundy, life's eternal apprentice. He later thinks of them as his Empty Quarter, though in number they amount to less than a decade.... Airborne once more, Mundy drifts between dream and reality. Rome, Athens, Cairo, Bahrain and Karachi receive him without comment and pass him on.

The idle, tuneless repetition of "years" in the first sentence, and those arch phrases "life's eternal apprentice" and "receive him without comment and pass him on": these flowery clichés are a long way from the pondered calm of the early books. Stranger still, Le Carré has become one of those writers who has apparently never met an adverb or adjective he did not like: "Summoned at darkest night to the Surrey villa, a bereft Mundy cradles his father's sweated head and watches him spew out the remaining fragments of his wretched life." Or: "Safely back in his college rooms, a trembling Mundy takes stock of his humble patrimony." Or: "'Tell him I sent you,' she implores, as the train mercifully pulls out." This is dismal prose, cartoonishly slack. And there are odd slips: Mundy, though he was born in 1948, uses the quaint imprecation "My hat!," which was last commonly used by the generation preceding Mundy's; a northerner is said to use the word "geezer" (surely a Cockneyism); and the owner of the accent thought to have been sired in the Levant and finished off in the Bronx uses the English word "arsehole" only to use the American word "ass" five pages later. Le Carré has said that he wrote *The Spy Who Came In From the Cold* in six weeks. *Absolute Friends* also seems rushed at times.

IT IS HARD FOR A CHARACTER OF any great interest to sprout from this shallow prose. And besides, Mundy does not really have a personality so much as a negative one; he is acted upon, a passive picaro. He falls into espionage without any great ideological cause. Le Carré suggests that Mundy's friendship with Sasha is the real spur—that the individual, at least for the Englishman, trumps doctrine. This is "absolute friendship," perhaps.

All this is plausible enough until the last third of the book. Time has moved on. The Wall has come down, Sasha has disappeared, and Mundy no longer works for British intelligence but lives a decent if down-at-heel life in Germany, where he works as a tour guide in one of King Ludwig's Bavarian castles. The first Gulf war occurs, and then the second. Without warning, Sasha appears again in Mundy's life, with another proposal. He is now working for a brilliant, shadowy entrepreneur, a kind of sinister negative of George Soros, the founder of an organization dedicated to opposing globalization, American hegemony, the meekness of the press, and the recent war in Iraq. Mundy agrees to meet him. The novel absconds from the plausible and enters the movies, as Mundy is driven by Jeep, at night, towards a wooded fortress manned and womanned by sterile, impassive aides, including the one whose speech is apparently "Vassar with a German accent." The billionaire weirdo may or may not be called Dimitri. He is the owner of the accent that Mundy imagined to be sired in the Levant. This man wants to set up what he calls a Counter-University, with branches around Europe, dedicated to an "Arms Race for Truth." He already has Sasha; now he wants Mundy on board.

Mundy is tempted. This Dimitri speaks a great deal of sense. He thinks the war to oust Saddam was "an old Colonial oil war dressed up as a crusade for Western life and liberty, and it was launched by a clique of war-hungry Judeo-Christian geopolitical fantasists who hijacked the media and exploited America's post–Nine Eleven psychopathy." Mundy agrees. Earlier, he had told Sasha that the recent war had made him

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sick. And Sasha agrees. "The most necessary in history," he sardonically intones, "the most moral and Christian—and the most unequal?"

These opinions are also shared by Le Carré, who has written ferociously against the British-American mission. Irrespective of whether one agrees or disagrees with Le Carré's position, it is clearly a little convenient, not to say hectoring, to have all three main characters so happily agreeing with one other. It might have been wise to have introduced here, if not a Counter-Counter University, then at least a Counter-Counter Opinion expressed by someone. Forget negative capability: why has Le Carré's vaunted "complexity" so swiftly departed the scene? The delicate eye for grayness, the mind that so happily balanced one side against the other and showed them to be as much alike as opposed—where has it gone? The Cold War, it turns out, was a vast sea of gray, but the last Iraq war, by contrast, was just a splash of obvious black and white.

AND THERE IS A FURTHER DIFficulty. Ted Mundy, unlike the zealous Sasha, has never been ideological, nor even very political—until now. In over thirty years of deeply political maneuvering, the only thing he is shown to get truly worked up about is the Iraq invasion. Well, that is not quite true. In a hasty piece of retroactive mortising, Le Carré tells us that Mundy's ire has been building ever since the Falklands War:

> He'd weathered Thatcher and the Falklands. He'd watched British schoolchildren display the Churchillian spirit, bawl "Rule Britannia!" at hastily commissioned cruise liners and decrepit naval destroyers with the mothballs still rattling inside them sailing away to free the Falklands. He'd been ordered by our Leaderene to rejoice at the sinking of the *Belgrano*. He'd nearly vomited. He was case-hardened.

Le Carré goes on to say that Mundy remembered, as a boy, the ill-fated Suez campaign, only to discover that the government, "then, as now, had lied in its teeth about its reasons for taking us to war." So why, Mundy asks himself, get so angry about this latest escapade if the lies of politicians are nothing new?

> It's old man's impatience coming on early. It's anger at seeing the show come round one too many times.... It's the discovery, in his sixth decade, that half a century after the death of empire, the dismally ill-managed country he'd done a little of this and that for is being marched off to quell the natives on the strength of a bunch of lies, in order to please a renegade hyperpower that thinks it can treat the rest of the world as its allotment.

This is a revealing yell. First, we surely hear Le Carré breaking in and talking over his character; the passage has the noisy, spreading wail of a personal complaint. (Le Carré has not denied this in interviews.) Second, its illogicality is striking. Britain, it seems, is convicted of fighting three colonial wars—Suez, the Falklands, and Iraq (that phrase "quell the natives" is wildly imprecise about all three involvements, but let it pass for the moment). The Falklands War is the bolt that allows Mundy/Le Carré to make a troika of the three adventures. And it is surely the Falklands War that betrays the extent to which Le Carré's anti-Americanism would seem to have little to do with scruples about "quelling the natives" and actually a great deal to do with shame at the diminishment of British power.

The Falklands War of 1982 is easy to mock: a few rocks six thousand miles away from home; a belligerent Thatcher; a rickety navy that had to scramble civilian boats in order to muster its armada; a morally questionable decision to sink an Argentinian boat, the *Belgrano*. But surely it was different from Suez and Iraq. The armada was launched in response to an invasion of the islands by Argentinian forces; the inhabitants of the islands, none of them Argentinian, wanted to remain British; and the Argentinians were at that time ruled by a brutal fascist junta. Thatcher's little war reversed the invasion and—curiously unimportant to Ted Mundy, the former spy—brought about the downfall of the Argentinian junta. Mundy/Le Carré does not even have his facts straight: Thatcher did not ask the nation to rejoice at the sinking of the *Belgrano*; she asked it to rejoice at the re-taking of the first island, South Georgia, by British marines, which happened before the sinking of the *Belgrano*.

The political analysis is morally hazy. But what is interesting is what seems most to enrage Mundy/Le Carré: not the colonial nature of the Falklands War, but the shame of the once-great Churchillian spirit being wheeled out again for such an obvious whimper of a conflict. It is not the rightness or the wrongness of the action that seems to engage Mundy, but its post-imperial aesthetics—the "hastily commissioned cruise liners and decrepit naval destroyers." Likewise, in the Iraq war, what seems to gall is the shame, "half a century after the death of empire," that this "dismally ill-managed country" is being pushed around by the great American parvenu. This is not politics at all, and it is certainly very far from political "complexity." It represents the perfect fusion of imprecise leftism (all three wars somehow being about "quelling the natives") and imprecise rightism (what a shame that Britain is no longer properly "Churchillian").

ABSOLUTE FRIENDS ENDS IN a coarse outburst of anti-Americanism. Mundy's involvement with Dimitri's sinister organization attracts the notice of his former handlers, who approach him with an offer: they want him to penetrate Dimitri's Counter-University, which seems to be getting its money from Saudi Arabia, and tell them what he discovers. Mundy agrees to it. But it is a setup. Absurdly, Sasha and Mundy die in a hail of bullets as a band of American stormtroopers gun them down in a Heidelberg street. The killing was planned, it is later revealed, to make an example of people who dabble with quasi-terrorist organizations, and to enable the American authorities to claim a victory on European soil in the "war on terrorism." "What goes for the terrorists in Iraq sure as hell goes for terrorists in Heidelberg," a "senior US defense official" is quoted as saying.

The ludicrous extraneousness of this dénouement, its lack of any organic connection to the preceding three hundred pages, is the formal counterpart to the peculiarity that Mundy's only real ideological fixation as an adult seems to have been George W. Bush's policy in Iraq. The fixation is quite literally an irruption, and the irruption breaks the book into two. "I only ever cared about the *man* ... I never gave a fig for the ideologies," George Smiley once said. Le Carré, in this humanly implausible and ideologically enraged novel, appears to give a fig for neither. ■

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CAMBRIDGE DIARIST

Two Deaths

JUST ABOUT EVERY WORLD LEADER one can count on to be sanctimonious has condemned Israel's killing of Sheik Ahmed Yassin, the founder and "spiritual" leader of Hamas. (Why were they never as outraged when Yassin's minions slaughtered Jewish civilians?) Kofi Annan, the pope, British Foreign Secretary Jack Straw, French Foreign Minister Dominique de Villepin, EU foreign policy chief Javier Solana—they all sang more or less the same trope: Israel's missile strike was a criminal act. So did Syria's President Bashar Assad and every shade of theocrat competing for power in Tehran. Yasir Arafat, a man who knows something about the mass homicide of civilians, also condemned the attack. He was joined by Hanan Ashrawi, one of the few Christians remaining in Arafat's Palestine and a virtual staffer at PBS. For his part, Ahmed Qurei, pretender to the prime ministry of the viable state his boss rejected at Camp David and Taba, simply lied, saying, "Yassin was known for his moderation." After an equivocal statement on Monday morning, the White House—trying to show exactly the right amount of distress, not too little, not too much—announced that it was "deeply troubled" by the "incident in Gaza." John Kerry is yet to be heard on the matter.

IF ANYBODY REALLY BELIEVES IT WAS wrong for Israel to kill Yassin, they must also believe the United States should immediately give up the pursuit of Osama bin Laden and Ayman Al Zawahiri. (Or at least pursue them only in a court of law, not on the battlefield.) Yassin was as much a combatant as they are. (Even Human Rights Watch places Yassin at the center of Hamas terrorism.) If Israel cannot kill the leader of an organization dedicated to killing Jews, how exactly does the world propose that it defend itself? Perhaps by taking merely defensive measures, like building a fence to keep the terrorists out? No, Israel's security fence now sits in the dock at the Hague. Perhaps the world wants Israel to take the Spanish option: Wait for an enormity and then arrest some after-the-facts suspects. But Israel has already suffered many Madrids over many years. And one big reason is Sheik Yassin, who, unlike Arafat, does not even pretend to favor a two-state solution. The litany of innocent Israeli civilians murdered by Hamas alone from March 4, 2001, to March 14, 2004, is more than 300, and the wounded and maimed number in the thousands (these figures exclude victims of the *other* Palestinian "liberation fronts," including Arafat's multiple militias). The dead are irrefutable evidence of the Palestinians' unwillingness to accept a reasonable territorial compromise while insisting on a pathological war that assures the suffering of Arabs and Jews alike.

THE ANNANS OF THIS WORLD PRETEND Israel's action against Yassin was a rude interruption to an ongoing peace process. But the fact is, there has been no real peace process for years—largely because both the United Nations and the governments of Europe, nostalgic for the days when they actually mattered, have been propping up—both financially and politically—the Palestinian terrorism groups with the most blood on their hands. It was, after all, only a few months ago that the European Union even grudgingly (but, of course, not explicitly) acceded to the elementary proposition that Hamas was a machine for the indiscriminate killing of Jews.

AHMED YASSIN WAS, ACCORDING TO the newspaper cliché, Hamas's "spiritual leader." It seems that now, with his death, he is also being accorded recognition as a spiritual leader in the wider world of Islam. That is not good news for Islam, or the world. And it further mocks the claim made by Roy Mottahedeh, professor of Islamic history at Harvard, in a *New York Times* op-ed soon after the September 11 attacks that contemporary "jihad must be understood as a struggle without arms."

BUT THERE IS AT LEAST ONE HOPEFUL story coming out of the Muslim world today—and it is the growing power of the Kurds. In Iraq, of course, the Kurds are experiencing a new birth of freedom after their slaughter at the hands of Saddam Hussein. And the experience seems to be emboldening their cousins across the border in Syria.

THE PLIGHT OF THE KURDS ACROSS THE Middle East rarely garners much sympathy on the left, even though this mostly Muslim people has been persecuted by Arabs for more than 1,000 years—which is to say a millennium before anyone ever conceived of the term "Palestinian." Perhaps it is because the Kurds generally like the United States. At a soccer game in El Qamishliye, Syria, on March 12, the Kurds, cheering on their local team, chanted, "We love Bush." Syrian security services responded by firing into the crowd, killing several Kurds. The stadium cleared out. But unrest spread elsewhere in the country, and some more Kurds were murdered, a total of perhaps 30, and many others were arrested. Such repression shouldn't surprise anyone—after all, Syria has a Baath government. But it does stand as a useful reminder to those commentators who wrote so optimistically about the gentle optometrist, Assad, when he succeeded his father four years ago.

SHEIK YASSIN YEARNED FOR DEATH AND martyrdom, and he got them. George Khoury did not yearn for either. But, last week, Arafat's Al Aqsa Martyrs Brigade gave him both nonetheless. Khoury was a 20-year-old Israeli Arab studying international relations at the Hebrew University. Last Friday evening, he was jogging from the campus through the adjoining neighborhood of French Hill when he was felled in a drive-by shooting. His father is a lawyer who has defended many Palestinians in Israeli courts. His grandfather was killed in a bombing by another of Arafat's bands in Jerusalem's Zion Square in the summer of 1975, two bookends of a family destroyed by one man. That 1975 bombing was one of the first mass atrocities of emergent Palestine. I was in the city with my young son back then, and I still remember the shock that coursed the populace. There is no longer shock. But the grief has not become routine. My Jerusalem friends wept for young Khoury. His family was not appeased when Al Aqsa, finding that they had not murdered a Jew as planned but a Christian, apologized and dispatched him to heaven, also as a "martyr" just like Yassin. Khoury is the latest victim of Palestinian nationalism. I doubt he will be the last.

MARTIN PERETZ

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Some Sobering Thoughts on Pakistan's Future—and Ours

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The revelation that Pakistani scientists have transmitted knowledge about atomic weapons to Iran and Libya refocuses our attention on this troubled ally. President Pervez Musharraf, a survivor of many assassination attempts, is despised by those who desire to impose a Taliban-type regime on the nation. If a military junta armed with nuclear weapons and sympathetic to radical Islamists took over, the outcome could be disastrous.

President Musharraf's most implacable enemies are fundamentalist Islamic groups whose members are found in parliament, the army, the intelligence services (SIS), the intelligentsia, and government. Indeed, the Pakistani army and SIS were instrumental in the Taliban's coming to power in Afghanistan.

The hostility toward President Musharraf stems from his cooperation with the United States and his policies toward India and the Kashmir region. His enemies hope to undermine him by fanning the flames of dissatisfaction. **We can help Pakistan achieve stability by discouraging policies that create unrest and encouraging policies that will benefit the struggling population.**

Some policies should be immediately dropped, including the president's well-intentioned land reform program. Although half of Pakistan's population is engaged in rudimentary agriculture, in country after country, government redistribution of private property has failed.

The government ought to also abandon attempts to impose Urdu as the official language. Only 8 percent of Pakistanis were Urdu speakers in 2003, with surveys indicating that more than half the population prefers to have their children taught in English because it is the lingua franca of the government and the elite. Pakistan should take a lesson from India, which has shown that allowing linguistic groups greater autonomy creates a stake for these provinces to stay within the union.

The government also needs to raise the level of literacy. Less than half the population is currently literate, in part due to policies that favor higher education at the expense of wider availability of elementary education. A better-educated public would make Pakistan much more attractive for direct foreign investment—thus bettering the lives of ordinary citizens.

The United States must encourage Pakistan to divert a greater portion of its GNP toward elementary and secondary education for women. Among many benefits, educated women tend to have fewer children and those children are healthier and attain higher levels of education than do children of uneducated women.

Poor economic prospects have forced university and high school graduates to migrate to the gulf countries, Western Europe, and the United States. That trend must be slowed and eventually reversed. Economic prospects at home would improve if Pakistan liberalized its economy. The United States can help by extending its program that provides credit and business development services to micro-entrepreneurs to Pakistan.

Lastly, Pakistan and other countries, including the United States, must convince Saudi Arabia to support secular schools instead of funding radical Islamic schools—these madrassas have been hotbeds for terrorism.

Reform and stability will not come easily. But **we must help President Musharraf create a more open economy, a freer political system, a broader educational system, and greater respect for provincial authority.** If he does not succeed, we will likely face very unpleasant consequences.

—Guity Nashat

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In The Definitive Hours Of America Votes 2004 Coverage

AMERICA TURNS TO CNN

★ #1 On Super Tuesday!

During primetime on March 2, CNN delivered the largest audience in cable news

★ #1 On Key Primary Nights!

From 9-11pm on the five key primary nights, CNN delivered more viewers than any other cable news network

★ 42% Audience Growth!

On key primary nights CNN had the highest audience growth in cable news vs. 4th quarter 2003

★ 3 Out Of Top 4 Debates!

This political season, CNN had three of the highest-rated debates among P25-54

AMERICA VOTES 2004: THE RACE IS ON!

CNN®

THE MOST TRUSTED NAME IN NEWS

Source: Nielsen Media Research: Super Tuesday 3/2/04, Based on P2+; Key Primary Dates: Jan. 19, Jan 27, Feb. 3, Feb. 17 and Mar. 2, Based on P2+; Audience growth based on Prime 8-11p Key Primary Dates vs. Q4 '03, Based on P2+; Political Season (9/9/03 - 2/26/04) Democratic Debates: Feb. '04, Oct. '03, Nov. '03; Based on P25-54. Subject to qualification, available upon request.

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